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Policy Aspects of the Deployment of U.S. Marines To Lebanon - 1982-1984

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A Case Study by Robert L. Pugh

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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ERRATUM

Please make pen and ink changes, as follows:

Page 22 - line 11 - delete the second "e" in "headquarters"

Page 25 - seventh line from bottom - delete the first comma.

Page 30 - line 5 - change 12,00 to 12,000

Page 31 - line 13 - add a coma after parenthesis

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Summary	1
Introduction	3
"An Excruciating Blunder"	7
The GOL	11
The LAF	13
The Second Deployment	17
Relationship with IDF	20
The Situation Deteriorates	23
Sunday, October 23, 1983 and Afterward	30
The Long Commission	32
The Congressional Role	33
MNF Coordination	35
The Military Chain of Command	40
Special Emissaries	43
Marine Role at American Embassy	45
Conclusion: "Able Men Carrying Out Difficult Roles in Uncertain Times"	51
Glossary	53
Bibliography	56

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POLICY ASPECTS OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF U.S.
MARINES TO LEBANON - 1982-1984

SUMMARY

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon was inspired and directed by Defense Minister Sharon, whose lack of candor with his fellow cabinet members was more than matched by the perfidy he showed in his dealings with the USG as he expanded the war by engaging the Syrians and besieging Beirut. Israeli rejection of a United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force led to creation of a multinational force (MNF), including U.S. Marines, that successfully oversaw the evacuation of Palestinian and Syrian forces but withdrew prematurely. Bashir Gemayel's assassination then was exploited by Israel in its seizure of West Beirut, during which it introduced Christian militiamen into Palestinian camps, where the infamous massacre ensued. The MNF re-entered Beirut under a broadened, and ultimately unrealistic, mandate.

Initially welcomed by Lebanese as protectors, the local standing of the Marines was eroded early in 1983 by the emerging terms of the imminent US-brokered Lebanese-Israeli accord and, perhaps, by Marine training of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). Nearby attacks on the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) led to problems between it and Marines that reflected differing perceptions and produced political anxiety. The destruction of the U.S. Embassy added its external security to the Marines' mission. The conclusion of the May 17, 1983, Lebanese-Israeli accord aroused Moslem and Syrian opposition and caused the deterioration of the political situation, including that for the Marines. The IDF's move south opened the way for the September 1983 mountain war, which engulfed the Marines, causing many casualties, and led to direct U.S. firing in support of the LAF. Congressional action defined the Marines' status under the War Powers Act and defined their tenure as "up to 18 months". The truckbombing of the battalion landing team (BLT) headquarters building killed 241 and aroused congressional and public opinion. Investigative reports by a Department of Defense commission and the House Armed Services Committee, as well as a failed U.S. bombing raid, focused dissatisfaction. The likely congressional initiatives to follow, as well as persistent DOD/JCS efforts to terminate a mission they had never wished, led to Administration planning for a withdrawal well short of the permissible stay. This was overtaken by the February 1984 collapse of the LAF and seizure of West Beirut by Moslem militias, whereupon the complete withdrawal of the Marines inevitably followed.

The Marine deployment was a constant bone of contention with the Congress, which regarded the Administration as never fully in compliance with the War Powers Act until, in October 1983, Congress enacted a resolution that seemed to close the gap. The applicability and constitutionality of the War Powers Act promise to be an issue whenever deployment of U.S. military forces abroad is contemplated or implemented.

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The military chain of command was bypassed and circumvented in sometimes unhelpful and dangerous ways as, on occasion, were the U.S. embassies in countries interested in the Israeli adventure in Lebanon. Finally, the contingent of Marines who provided security for the embassy in West Beirut prevented any incursion or harm to embassy personnel throughout the 15 months they were there. But it is a mission so unpopular that it is unlikely to be repeated absent further extraordinary circumstances.

Robert L. Pugh
May, 1985

Introduction

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U.S. Marine forces, supported constantly by U.S. Navy units and, in later phases, augmented by U.S. Army specialists, were the chosen instrument of U.S. policy in Lebanon from mid-1982 to early 1984. While their initial deployment, 17 days in August-September 1982, was an outstanding success, it was marred by the events that followed their early withdrawal. Of more lasting significance was the second deployment, which began in a very positive atmosphere that progressively passed through Lebanese disillusionment and discontent to active Marine combat and disaster. Why this occurred, at what point things went wrong, and what else might have been done instead are all questions to which clear answers are hard to come by.

Even worse, there apparently is no mechanism either in the National Security Council (NSC) or the Department of State for doing an after action report, and it seems that the events are too recent and the participants still too engaged in leadership or management roles to permit the kind of retrospective examination that the DOD and U.S. military entities are capable of producing. But a number of open-source articles and books have been published that give considerable insight on what was happening during the U.S. involvement in Lebanon. While they cannot by the narrow range of their sources be definitive, a number of these represent valuable insights, or stimulating polemics, concerning the period. More can be expected as those directly involved are freed of current responsibilities and are able to ruminate on the tumultuous events in which they played a part. Meanwhile, the lessons of Lebanon for U.S. involvement in peackeeping activities, for the inevitable continuation of a U.S. role in the Middle Eastern problem, and for the use of military forces as an instrument of foreign policy all need to be learned.

The descriptive analysis that follows is necessarily incomplete and sketchy, for the issues demand treatment in much greater detail, and hence length, than this format would allow. This treatment is at once chronological and topical (and episodic in both approaches) for neither approach alone enables a coherent story to be told. Above all, while what follows reflects the views of the author it represents to a great extent the common view developed in Embassy Beirut with well-informed and courageous officers of several agencies whose dedication and concern for their country's interests were everything that, indeed more than, could be expected. It also reflects the recollections and judgments of a number of Marines who were directly involved, either in Beirut or in higher commands, and of others whose knowledge of the events of Beirut added to the author's understanding.

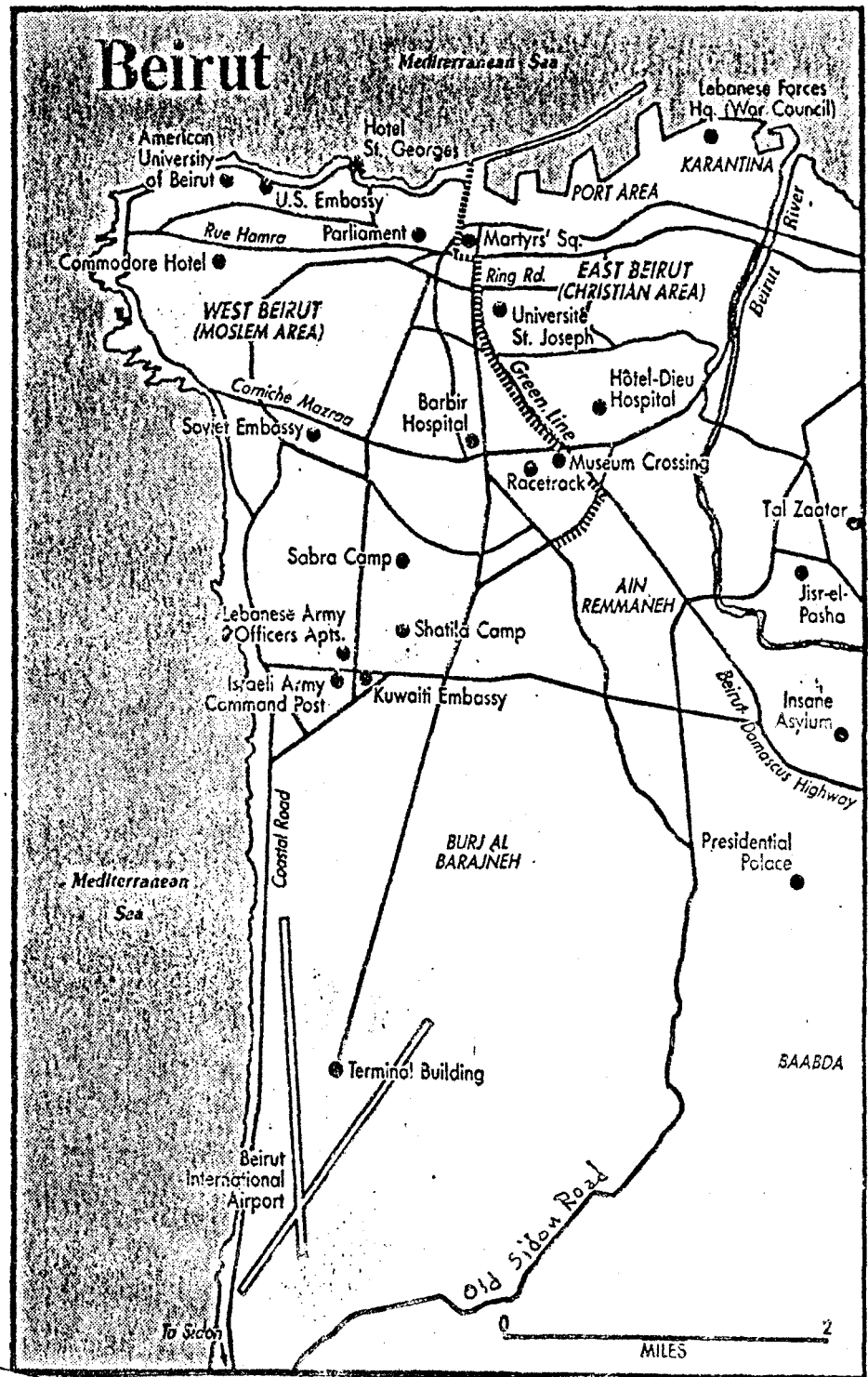
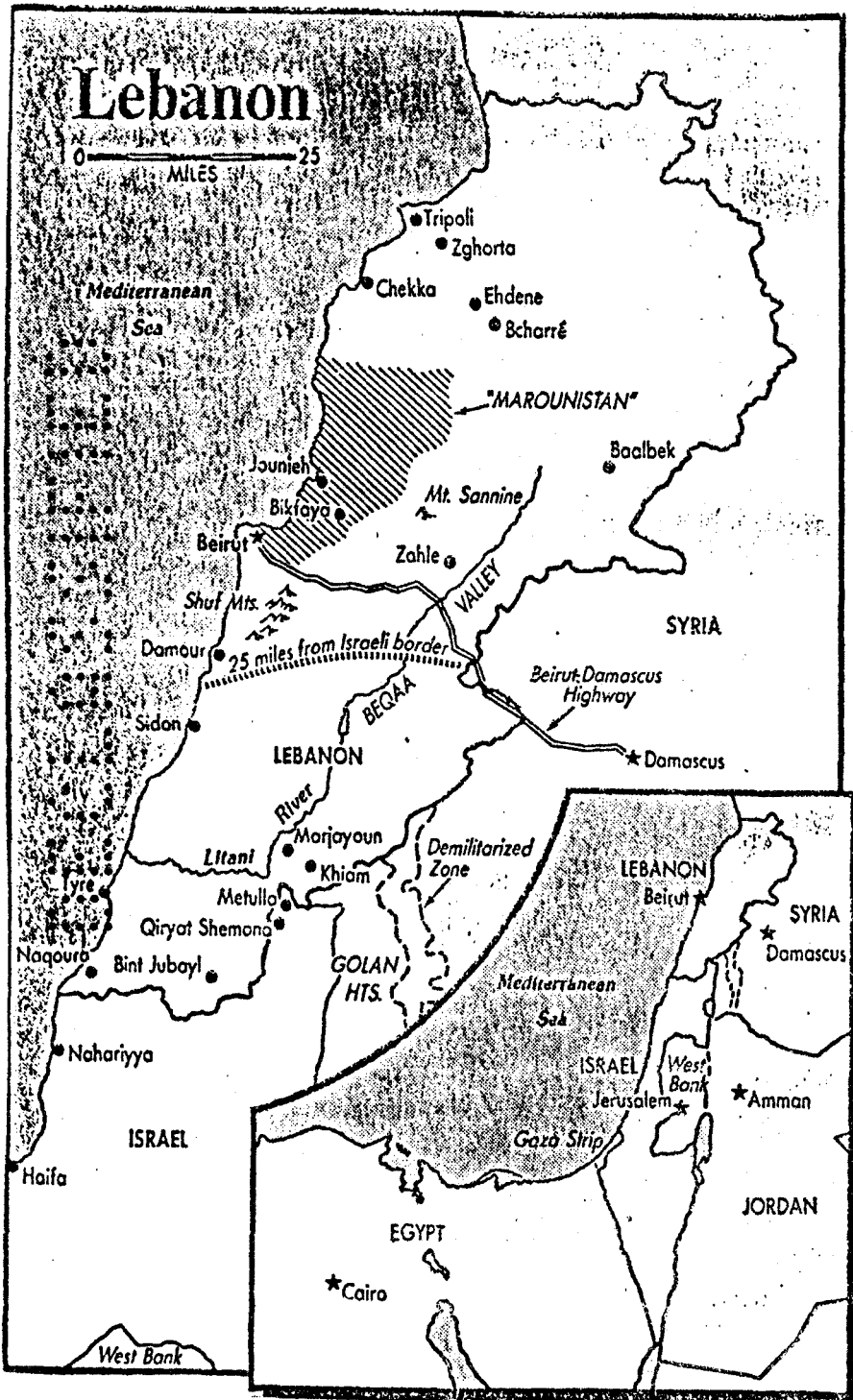
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This paper draws in some measure on everything listed in the bibliography, and some items that were not, which were melded with the recollections of observers and participants. While in some places published sources are identified, no effort has been made to footnote or document specific points. The author has sought to ensure that everything in the paper, except opinions clearly expressed or identified, are facts in the public domain. The descriptions of Israeli strategy and motivations draws heavily on the Schiff-Yaari book, a remarkable exercise in ferreting out and describing the political background of Israel's adventure.

Marines sometimes are held to be less introspective and more given to direct action than representatives of the other military services. Like all stereotypes, it is possible to find Marines who fit this mold, but not many in the higher ranks. An acute awareness of the complexities of the environment, the mission, and the situation was characteristic of most of the Marine officers who held responsible positions bearing on the Marine deployment in Beirut. While it is possible to fault some military officers and government officials who dealt with the Lebanese situation, I found the basic judgments of responsible Marines to have been sound and praiseworthy throughout.

Marines who served in Lebanon take pride in what they believe their country sought to do for Lebanon and the Lebanese. What the Marines did there cannot be termed a defeat for they never fought in any traditional Marine sense but, instead, were limited to exercising the right of self-defense. It was never appropriate to act in any other way.

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PARTIAL CHRONOLOGY OF MARINE DEPLOYMENT IN LEBANON

1982

June 6 - Israeli invasion begins.
August 25 - Marines arrive to help in PLO withdrawal.
September 1 - Last PLO combatant departs Beirut.
September 10 - Marines leave Beirut.
September 14 - President-elect Bashir Gemayel assassinated.
September 15 - Israelis enter west Beirut.
September 16-18 - Massacre of Palestinians in Sabra/Shatilla.
September 21 - Amin Gemayel elected President of Lebanon.
September 29 - Marines return for second deployment of multinational force.
December 28 - Israeli-Lebanese formal negotiations begin.

1983

April 18 - U.S. Embassy chancery destroyed by truck-bomb.
May 17 - Israeli-Lebanese agreement signed.
August 29 - First Marines killed in combat.
August 28-31 - Militia and LAF clashes in west Beirut.
September 4 - Israelis withdraw from Shouf to Awali River line. Mountain war erupts.
September 19 - U.S. naval gunfire mission in support of LAF at Souq al Gharb.
September 26 - Ceasefire in mountain war.
October 12 - President signs Multinational Force in Lebanon Resolution.
October 23 - Truck-bomb attack destroys BLT headquarters.
December 4 - U.S. airstrike on Syrian positions.
December 28 - Long Commission report released.

1984

February 7 - West Beirut seized by Druze and Shia militias.
February 10-11 - Evacuation of American/British and third country nationals.
February 26 - Marines complete redeployment afloat.
March 5 - GOL renounces May 17, 1983, agreement with Israel.
August 10 - Marine external security forces leave Beirut.

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According to authoritative, published accounts, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was a long-prepared campaign, launched on a pretext and hobbled in critical ways in its execution in order to deny to the Israeli cabinet knowledge that Beirut was the ultimate objective set by Defense Minister Sharon. Sharon was aided and abetted by Prime Minister Begin in this deception, but acted, on occasion, beyond even Begin's understanding of the Israeli Defense Force's (IDF's) scope of action. Thus, while Begin was assuring the world, and particularly the United States, of Israel's intention only to clear the PLO out of areas from which Israel could be shelled, the IDF was sent to Beirut in an incremental advance designed to keep the Israeli cabinet from realizing how extensive the planned operation was to be until the IDF was inextricably involved.

Moreover, Sharon's deception extended to his scheme---also not sanctioned by the Israeli cabinet---to attack the Syrian Army in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley despite Syria's clear intention not to use its forces in Lebanon to assist the PLO. While Israel scored remarkable successes with its Air Force, the ground combat with Syria was difficult and indecisive. This clash also entailed the risk of a US-Soviet confrontation in support of their respective client states, and consequently led to efforts to bring the fighting to a halt. Although a Syrian brigade was also trapped there, the ceasefire then arranged with Syria did not inhibit the IDF from conducting a siege of West Beirut to destroy or expel the PLO, an effort that gripped world attention and led to a prolonged effort by U.S. negotiators to arrange the PLO's departure.

Sharon's larger objective reportedly had its roots in the relationship with Israel that Maronite Christians had sought and established as a result of their reverses in the 1975-76 Lebanese civil war, and Bashir Gemayel had let the Israelis believe that his Christian militia (the Lebanese Forces) would actively participate in the expulsion of the PLO when the IDF reached Beirut. But beyond that, Sharon intended to ensure Gemayel's election as President of Lebanon on the assumption that a Maronite-dominated state would enter into a peace treaty with Israel. Gemayel apparently had let the Israelis believe that this, too, would come about.

Bashir Gemayel declined to have the Lebanese Forces (LF) participate in force in the siege of Beirut. However, the LF did give active assistance by providing rear area security in much of the region occupied by Israel. The only active fighting by the LF in the siege of Beirut was in an attack carried out by the LF against (presumably) Palestinians defending from the Science Faculty of the Lebanese University, a facility that would figure prominently in the U.S. Marine experience a year later. This attack cost the LF 8 or 9 dead, and the effort was not repeated. Whether the LF would have joined in the IDF's effort to expel the Palestinians if the Israelis had been more successful in their brief campaign against the Syrians is a moot point, because the Syrians remained on the western slope of Mount Sannine and

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controlled the Baydar Pass on the Beirut-Damascus highway. Nevertheless, the undertaking by the LF actively to participate in the expulsion of the Palestinians was left unfulfilled and doubtless was part of the reason the LF played the central role in mid-September in yet another Lebanese horror.

Beyond the Israeli effort to ensure that the PLO was removed as a military/terrorist threat to northern Israel was the larger purpose of destroying the credibility of the PLO as a valid expression of Palestinian national aspirations. Begin and Sharon anticipated that once the PLO was defeated and dispersed, the population of the West Bank and Gaza would become tractable and pose no obstacle to the absorption of these territories into "Eretz Israel." It has also been suggested that Sharon, at least, foresaw that after Lebanon had been neutralized it would be Jordan's turn next, and that the Hashemite monarchy would be overturned in order to enable the Palestinians to have a homeland in Jordan, to which those in "Eretz Israel" might then be forced to relocate.

Once it brought Beirut under seige, the IDF continued to apply intensive military pressure, bombing and shelling the southern suburbs for the most part but also doing damage throughout the rest of West Beirut. The Israelis wished to impose a total and humiliating defeat, while the PLO sought to reap maximum political benefit from the world attention that was riveted on Beirut through defying Israel as long as possible.

The United States Government (USG), having acted as a mediator between Israel and the PLO to produce a ceasefire in June 1981, felt impelled to bring about a resolution of the impasse that the IDF had fallen into when it beseiged Beirut, although because of the very heavy casualties such an operation would produce the IDF likely never had the intention of assaulting the city. More important, however, was the growing outrage in world opinion resulting from the extensive destruction visited upon Beirut by American weaponry wielded by a state that from its inception was beholden to the United States but which was seen as running amok. This was something the USG simply could not ignore. Ambassador Habib and his team worked through Sunni leaders in West Beirut, since they had to adhere to the self-imposed U.S. prohibition on direct contact or dealing with the PLO. Periodic ceasefires were negotiated by Habib and company, but were broken regularly by the IDF on either slight or contrived provocation.

Although the USSR had stated its support for a UN peacekeeping force, it doubtless would have opposed one that included U.S. forces; and Israel objected to any international force that did not include U.S. forces. Even if a UN peacekeeping force had been acceptable to all, defining its mandate would have proven exceedingly difficult, for Israel doubtless saw a UN force as a device that would have ended the fighting indecisively and thus have robbed Israel of the fruits of its summer war, leaving the PLO in a martyr's role and still in Beirut. In the Israeli

view, such an outcome would have allowed the PLO to snatch political victory from the jaws of military defeat. Given the reluctance of the USG, of whatever political complexion, to be at cross purposes with Israel, the only solution seemed to be a multinational force in which the United States would participate. The scheme to commit U.S. troops by all accounts was opposed at the Pentagon. Secretary of Defense Weinberger, in particular, was reported to believe that the peacekeeping role in Lebanon was not appropriate for the forces of a superpower. He argued that a UN force would be more in keeping with the requirements of Beirut, but the imperatives of the situation meant that action sooner rather than later would be required. It was to be a multinational force (MNF). Potential U.S. involvement in a multinational force was first broached in a message from President Reagan to Prime Minister Begin on July 3, 1982, and it was leaked by the Israeli radio a few days later, before it had even been mentioned to the Congress. France also reportedly stood ready to participate, and, as the proposal matured, the Italians, too, agreed to play a role. Although many other countries were approached, they equivocated or simply declined to be involved.

Ambassador Habib, meanwhile, brought the two parties agonizingly closer to agreement on the terms of an evacuation of PLO combatants by sea to other Arab countries, while Syria finally agreed to take some Palestinians by sea as well as some to be evacuated overland with the Syrian 85th Brigade. The terms of the MNF deployment were themselves a matter of some contention. Sharon reportedly insisted that the MNF remain in Beirut no more than 30 days, possibly (as Schiff/Yaari state) to leave the Phalange and the LAF free after that period to go into West Beirut to remove all armed Palestinians. Agreement was finally reached in mid-August and ships were chartered in the name of the International Red Cross, with Saudi Arabia agreeing to underwrite the operation.

One issue which had pre-occupied the PLO was the safety of the many thousands of non-combatant Palestinians to be left behind in Beirut. The departure plan for removal of the PLO from Beirut contained two separate provisions that have been linked in criticism of the failure of the MNF to prevent the massacre at Sabra/Shatila. The termination of the MNF's stay was to be "not later than 30 days after arrival..." and the actual withdrawal of the USMNF was on September 10 after 17 days stay. (The massacre occurred on September 16-18.) This was despite a provision of the Schedule of Departure that called for the MNF during the period September 4-21 to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) "to insure good and lasting security throughout the area of operation." The other provision gave guarantees of safety from the Government of Lebanon (GOL) and USG for the Palestinian noncombatants who remained in Beirut, guarantees that were explicitly on the basis of "assurances" received by the GOL from "armed groups" and by the USG "from the Government of Israel and from the leadership of certain Lebanese groups with which it has been in touch." Furthermore, Habib in a message to Prime Minister Wazzan said "I would like to assure you that the United States Government fully recognizes the importance of these assurances from the Government of Israel and that my Government will do its utmost to insure that these assurances are scrupulously observed." (Quote from Ball - Error and Betrayal in Lebanon)

The deployment of the MNF to oversee the departure of the PLO was in all respects a total success. 8,300 PLO combatants were evacuated by sea to Jordan, Iraq, Yemen Arab Republic, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia and Algeria. 3,600 Syrians and 2,600 PLA members moved overland to Syria, and 175 sick and wounded PLO members were removed to Cyprus and Greece, with the last departure on September 1. With this accomplishment behind the MNF, it was clear the Secretary of Defense, who visited Beirut at the beginning of September, was anxious to withdraw USMNF before any untoward event caused casualties, none of which had been incurred during the deployment to that date. His influence undoubtedly was a major factor in the decision taken to withdraw prematurely. While the Italians were content to follow the U.S. lead, the U.S. decision was received unhappily by the French, whose withdrawal pointedly followed the American by two days.

On the evening of September 14, two days after the last element of the MNF had departed Lebanon, when President-elect Bashir Gemayel was in the building where he spoke at the same time on the same day of every week to Phalange party faithful, he was killed by an explosive device set earlier and command-detonated as he was speaking. This event precipitated the IDF seizure of West Beirut and, upon their introduction into the camps by the IDF, the Lebanese Forces' massacre of many hundreds of those same Palestinian noncombatants whose safety the United States had guaranteed on the basis of assurances from Israel.

It is speculative, of course, to wonder whether the assassination of Bashir Gemayel would have taken place when it did if the MNF had still been in Beirut. If so, the IDF certainly would not have overrun the city nor have had the opportunity to loose the Lebanese Forces on Sabra/Shatila. However, it is also possible that if the assassination had been staged later, after an MNF withdrawal on the scheduled dates, and had led to a repetition of the IDF seizure of West Beirut and Lebanese Forces massacre of Palestinians, it would not have produced the crisis of conscience that it did when the MNF governments evidently felt they had abandoned the Palestinians and, in so doing, tarnished their national honor.

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Although Amin Gemayel's election (which is by parliamentary rather than popular vote in the Lebanese system) in the immediate aftermath of his brother's assassination was by a much wider margin than Bashir had secured less than a month before, Amin did not enjoy the widespread popularity that Bashir's charisma and his popular appeals for national unity had produced. Nevertheless, Amin as a parliamentarian (a status Bashir had never sought) had striven to maintain good relations with virtually all factions in the parliament, and he was to enjoy the benefit of the doubt during the early period of his presidency. Much would hinge on how ecumenical his governmental practices would be and the degree of success he would be able to demonstrate in reuniting Lebanon, in part through the rapid removal of foreign forces, notably the IDF.

From the outset of the ambitious U.S. endeavor in Lebanon, which grew out of Israeli actions that necessitated the reintroduction of the Marines, the GOL sought to maximize the extent to which the United States was involved. The appointment by Amin Gemayel of a cabinet that unusually included four American University of Beirut (AUB) faculty members or graduates symbolized this. The Lebanese tendency to throw themselves in the arms of the United States was encouraged by U.S. rhetorical excesses that gave Gemayel and his colleagues reason to believe that they need not make the hard choices required if domestic tranquility was to be returned to Lebanon.

Amin's cabinet included some highly capable men and, as Lebanese cabinets traditionally do, it struck a careful confessional balance. But it was a cabinet of technocrats rather than of confessional group leaders, which was both a strength and a weakness. The ministers individually were more knowledgeable than most and doubtless more capable in carrying out their responsibilities than members of a traditional cabinet would have been; but they carried no political weight. Moreover, in the initial months of his presidency, Amin was accused of stacking various ministries with Phalangists at the Secretary General and other senior levels, thus raising doubts about his commitment to rise above his Phalange origins. The real measure of Amin's success, however, was destined to be his ability politically to reconstitute the country. Unfortunately, he clearly felt able to defer reform of the system, and the reconciliation to which it was a necessary prelude, until after foreign troops were removed.

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It rapidly became clear that the Israelis saw no advantage in agreeing to withdraw soon. Rather, a rapid withdrawal would have compromised the scheme of solidifying Christian role and extending and deepening the Israeli-Christian alliance through a peace treaty. It would also have allowed the focus of U.S. initiative to return to the Reagan plan, which had been anathematized by Begin's immediate rejection. Whether Amin was frustrated at the inability of the United States to engage the Israelis in withdrawal negotiations or simply was acting as the Christian reciprocal of the Israeli scheme, he moved early and without U.S. knowledge to deal through an informal emissary with Sharon. This resulted in a document that Sharon waved before the Knesset in early December 1982, where he claimed that it was the peace treaty Israel had long thought it might have with Lebanon as the second Arab country, after Egypt, to enter normal relations with it. This document became in essence the framework for the negotiations that finally would begin at the end of December. The Sharon document proved to be too heavy a weight for the negotiations, in which the United States played a full role, and the result was an agreement that never had a chance of being implemented.

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The LAF was a uniformed but undeployable entity in late 1982, one that had done virtually nothing but man checkpoints since it fractured along confessional lines during the 1975-76 civil war. Its soldiers were for the most part untrained, except for what might best be termed orientation at the unit level. It was trusted by none of the main confessional groups and was held in contempt by the Israelis, who made no effort to conceal their attitude. The numerical strength of the LAF was almost as illusory as its combat power, since the proportion of soldiers drawing pay who were also present for duty was astonishingly low. Its commander was an intelligent officer who lacked charisma and failed to project the image of a field soldier. High-ranking American officers who called on him at the Ministry of Defense noted that rather than field boots he habitually wore (Gucci?) loafers with the utilities (or field uniform) that was the daily garb of Lebanese military men, thus epitomizing in their view what was wrong with the LAF.

President Gemayel, having determined that securing the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon was his overriding priority (in which determination he was strengthened and encouraged by confident American predictions of early withdrawal), saw the LAF as essential to the concomitant task of reasserting central government control over all Lebanese territory. It was absolutely clear that the LAF would never be able to fight and defeat an invasion from either Syria or Israel, so its mission would be limited to internal security, including the possibility of securing the borders against infiltration. Re-equipment, reorganization, and revitalization of the LAF were prerequisites if the LAF was going to be able to carry out these roles. A U.S. military survey team was dispatched to Lebanon under a competent U.S. Army Brigadier General, and it produced a report that foresaw the need for an army of seven brigades, each of three mechanized infantry, one artillery, and one armored battalion plus support elements. Although this team did not believe that an army designed only to perform internal security functions needed any, it recommended that the armored battalion in only one of these brigades (the rest were to have existing armored cars or obsolete, French light tanks) be equipped with 35 M48A5 tanks, an action conceived of as a sop to the Lebanese but, as it developed, a precursor of things to come. The miniscule navy and grounded air force were judged to be irrelevant at that stage. In any event, the French, whose equipment already was prominent in these forces, were prepared to assist in their refurbishment.

New leadership was needed at the top of the LAF not only to revitalize it but as a symbol (to the Americans as well as to Lebanese) of new professionalism and determination. Gemayel chose Ibrahim Tannous, a colonel still on the LAF payroll but without an assignment for a number of years. Earlier he had opted to fight within the LF in defense of the Christian communities and had been badly wounded, losing the sight of one eye and partial use of one arm. But he had the qualities of leadership the LAF needed. Tannous' past connection with the LF posed a significant problem

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for the Moslem communities, and Prime Minister Chafik Wazzan (a Sunni, as are all Prime Ministers) balked for several weeks before finally acceding to this appointment. General Tannous turned out to be exactly what the LAF needed. He spoke convincingly of the need fully to integrate the various confessional groups and gave every indication of absolute sincerity in seeking to carry this out. Large quantities of U.S. equipment were ordered, and filling these orders was given very high priority in the United States. An Office of Military Cooperation (OMC) under a very able U.S. officer was established, and under its aegis Mobile Training Teams (MTT) were brought to Lebanon.

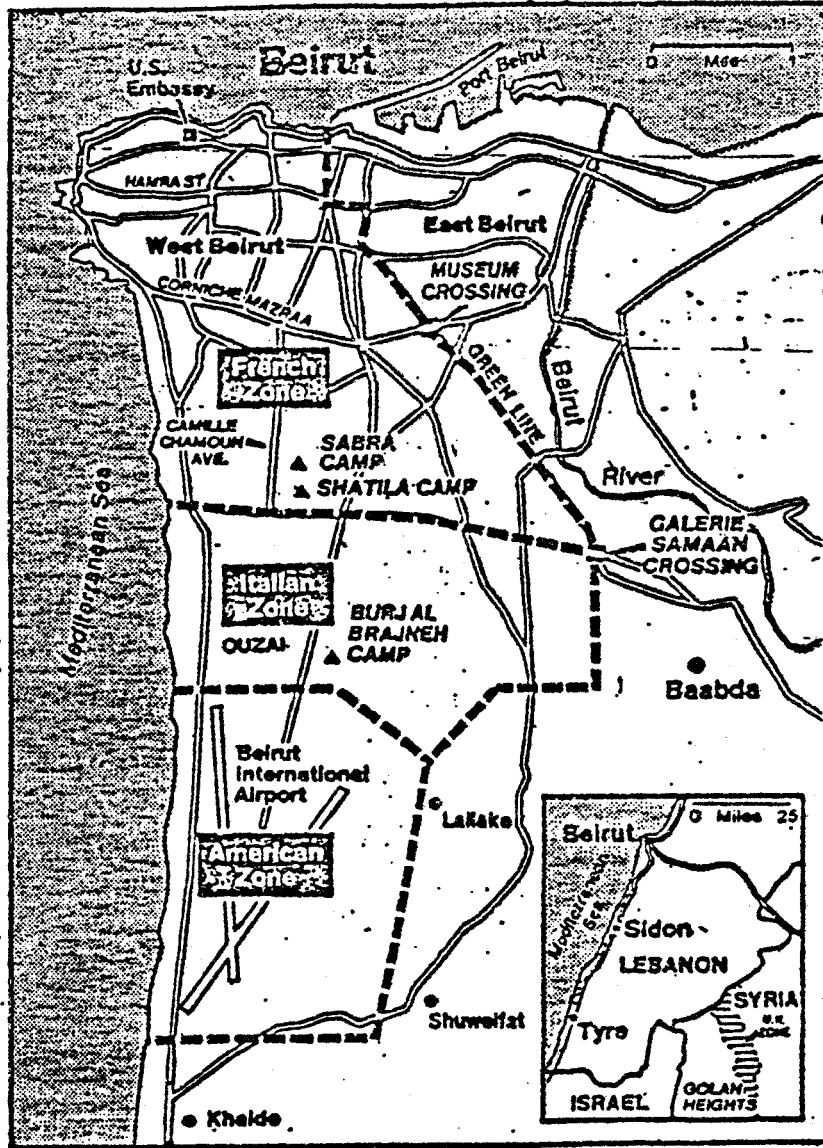
In this atmosphere, the Marines in USMNF were seen as an unutilized asset in the race to put the LAF in shape to take over control of Lebanese territory when the withdrawal of foreign armies, thought to be imminent, was realized. The MAU commander was eager to undertake this additional activity because it seemed to fit the requirement to help the LAF extend GOL control, and would engage the Marines in a constructive and interesting activity. Headquarters Marine Corps and the European Command (EUCOM) were less enthusiastic, however, as they saw the MAU's involvement in LAF training as an inhibitor to possible early withdrawal, a mission for which a MAU was not prepared, and quintessentially an Army mission. Nevertheless, the Marines were tasked to help train the LAF (under the guise of "cross training" to avoid the U.S. statutory requirement that the recipient country reimburse all costs of training) and did so with considerable effectiveness as well as local impact. In retrospect, this decision is seen by some thoughtful senior Marine officers as an unfortunate erosion of the neutrality they felt essential to the Marines' status as peacekeepers.

The GOL introduced conscription, and young men from all over Lebanon answered the call to colors. The center for inductee/recruit basic training was established near the Lebanese MOD/LAF headquarters where training was carried out with evident enthusiasm and seeming effectiveness. Meanwhile, existing battalions were cycled through refresher training in camps established immediately north of Beirut International Airport (BIA); these, too, gave every indication of reacting positively to the effort to bring basic military skills to an acceptable level. Beneath the apparent consensus on making the LAF the instrument and model for a multi-confessional extension of GOL control to all corners of a Lebanon soon (it was hoped) to be free of all foreign forces was the nagging doubt that the LAF could, in fact, perform the mission of enforcing internal security if that security was seriously endangered. The LAF's 1976 fracture on the Moslem-Christian fault line remained a disquieting precedent, and the continuing alienation of Walid Jumblatt and Nabih Barri, the key Druze and Shiite leaders, gave further cause for concern that the LAF would be unable to cope with the principal danger it faced.

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Persuasive though he was in his pronouncements and in most of his actions, Tannous through carefully controlled distribution and manning of equipment, hedged his bet on the success of the multi-confessional LAF. Units in West Beirut, for example, were given new and redistributed French armored vehicles while other units received more capable American equipment. It also became clear in retrospect (i.e. after the LAF in early 1984 again split to a large extent along confessional lines) that the men who filled the ranks of the tank and artillery battalions were disproportionately Christian. Moreover, instead of being physically with the brigades of which they were organic units, the artillery battalions were kept under centralized control and in Christian-controlled territory.

Tannous, in contrast with his predecessor, was very effective in his dealings with American military leaders. His enthusiasm, activism and great ability to relate to the soldier in the ranks are qualities highly prized in the American military ethic. Above all he seemed to have, or quickly be able to formulate, a clear concept of how he wished the LAF to develop, which helped generate support through the U.S. military chain of command and in Washington for a LAF which came to differ significantly from the Autumn 1982 model postulated, in conjunction with the then LAF leadership, by the U.S. military survey team. The projected force structure was expanded to nine brigades, and these were to be "heavied up" with the acquisition of more tanks and heavier artillery. Tannous also earned the support and admiration of the two highly capable U.S. Army colonels who served during this period as Chief Office of Military Cooperation (OMC), although these officers also had a fuller, and hence more balanced, appreciation of the likely LAF limitations.



Just as he had opposed the first deployment, Secretary of Defense Weinberger expressed great skepticism about the deployment of the Marines back into Beirut in the aftermath of Sabra/Shatila. In discussing a second deployment, Weinberger is said to have asked his U.S. military interlocutors when the Marines would come out, whether they could give him a date or, failing that, an event which would permit their withdrawal. When no satisfactory answer could be given, he asked whether in the absence of a date or event at least some criteria might be established. His concern and prescience were to no avail, however, and the deployment was to be essentially open-ended.

Meanwhile, Habib and Draper had been given the unenviable task of talking the Israelis out of Beirut, where the IDF was busily engaged in locating arms caches that had been ingeniously concealed throughout the city and in seizing PLO documents and other material of interest to it. In two days of difficult talks with Sharon, Habib finally prevailed, securing Israeli agreement to withdraw the IDF from all of Beirut, including BIA. The latter installation had proved to be a particularly sticky point, as Sharon long insisted that the IDF retain the right to use the airfield even after IDF units withdrew to Khaldeh, more than a kilometer south of the airport. When the Marines came in on August 29, however, the IDF withdrew no farther than Radio Orient, some 300 meters south of the end of the runway.

As EUCOM contemplated the practical issues of the second deployment, they faced a situation quite different from the earlier deployment. The Marines now faced a commitment of indeterminate duration in order to carry out a broad mission whose successful completion depended on the cooperation of three foreign governments and a host of Lebanese factional groups. Whereas the earlier deployment had produced a relatively easy decision to position the MAU in the port of Beirut (the focal point of the PLO evacuation), deciding upon a location for the Marines in the second deployment presented a more complex set of considerations. Given that the French would wish again to be in the downtown Beirut area where their embassy and cultural institutions are located, and the willingness of the Italians to cooperate in whatever scheme the United States devised, EUCOM considered three areas for the MAU's deployment, the port, the refugee camps, or the BIA. Although the port was desirable for the ease of logistical support it offered, it was in the heavily built-up area of Beirut where the Marines might be too vulnerable. The symbolism of putting Marines around the refugee camps following the massacre would have been too stark and the exposure of Marines there to hostile acts too great. BIA, in contrast, was essentially out of the city proper, in operable condition, flanked on the west by good beaches over which logistical support could be maintained as the Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) and MAU were trained to do it, and there was usable high ground nearby. These factors pointed toward a decision to move into the vicinity of BIA.

Beyond the considerations mentioned above was the political requirement to bring about an IDF pullback from Beirut and the realization that the Israelis were more likely to give up terrain to an American element than to another MNF component. It was also likely that the much greater proximity to the IDF inherent in positioning the MAU near BIA would make this a more sensitive area, as subsequent events bore out. Although it proved to be a difficult area, particularly in terms of the relationship with the IDF, the decision then taken to deploy the MAU in the vicinity of BIA proved politically astute, and with the notable exception of the truckbombing of October 23, 1983, this area probably was safer for the Marines than the other two alternatives would have been.

In planning the deployment of the MAU near BIA, EUCOM immediately concluded that it should be deployed on the high ground overlooking and dominating BIA. However, very real problems were inherent in occupying positions there, notably the insistence of the Israelis that they would continue to use the Old Sidon Road (OSR) as their main supply route (MSR). Despite an earlier indication from a high-ranking Israeli officer that the IDF could support its northernmost elements by using roads through the Shouf, the mountainous area between Beirut and the Bekaa Valley, the Israeli Defense Minister rejected this option, claiming - probably with some justification - that the mountain roads would prove too difficult in winter weather. It is at least as likely that his reluctance had to do with his desire to keep the IDF active and visible in the Beirut area. Whatever the Israeli motivation, the American negotiators conceded this, and EUCOM concluded that the MAU could not operate on the high ground with an open road used by the IDF traversing its rear, opting instead to position the MAU on the low ground between BIA and the OSR. That road runs from Khaldeh, on the coast south of BIA, in a northeasterly direction and then northerly to the Galerie Samaan intersection, never closer than 600 meters to BIA and usually one to two kilometers distant. The U.S. negotiators and the Israeli Defense Minister stated overlapping claims of operational limits, Sharon insisting that the IDF would feel free to maneuver to the railway line, paralleling the OSR and closer to BIA, in order to provide protection to its convoys of supply trucks, while the U.S. negotiators asserted that the Marines would be authorized to deploy up to but not over the OSR. EUCOM was not apprised of the failure to resolve this important issue until after the IDF's response to guerrilla attacks against it led to some misunderstanding.

The positions to be occupied by the MAU in the vicinity of BIA were oriented to face south and east, the direction of the new IDF dispositions and from which the Israelis had inserted the LF militia into Sabra/Shatila on September 16. Initially, the MAU was instructed to establish positions on a trace that went from the shoreline south of BIA, along the east side of BIA and northward to the Ambassador's residence in Baabda. This would have entailed stringing out the BLT's three rifle companies along

a line of 7,500 meters, some of it in built-up areas and a significant proportion on steep terrain. This was clearly an excessive distance, and the MAU recommended that the line of deployment terminate at the Science Faculty of the Lebanese University, which was accepted by EUCOM. The actual positions selected by the initial MAU around BIA were not changed significantly by any succeeding MAU until late in 1983, more than a year later. That initial MAU also decided to use three buildings in the BIA complex, including the civil aviation building, in order to house various support activities and command elements.

The location of the MAU around BIA was recognized by every MAU commander as tactically unsound, in that the terrain where positions were established was dominated by the ridgeline extending south from Alayh and by the intervening high ground. However, the dispositions chosen reflected the political nature of the deployment, one that explicitly precluded a combat role. The MAU commander's mission was, in fact, one of "presence" in which the very fact of the Marines being there was designed to assist the GOL to restore its control over Beirut. An essential precondition to the presence mission was a friendly or, at least, a non-hostile environment. Such conditions did, in fact, prevail for the first nine months of deployment.

The withdrawal of the IDF at the end of September 1982 enabled BIA to resume operations for the first time since the Israeli invasion was launched early in June. Middle East Airlines (MEA) aircraft flew into Beirut from Cyprus and Gulf states, to which all but three or four had been flown in a highly successful dispersal operation on June 7. The reopening of BIA after almost four months of closure gave a great boost to Lebanese morale, making the welcome for the Marines even warmer. As the Marines established their positions, LAF units re-established themselves at BIA, and LAF elements collocated with the Marines at certain checkpoints. Relationships were established with Lebanese working in various capacities at BIA, particularly with Trans Mediterranean Airline (TMA) personnel as the Helicopter squadron (HMM) established its flight line in a field immediately next to TMA's maintenance hanger. Marines helped clear rubble from, and restore to usable conditions buildings at the Science Faculty. As the Marines settled into a routine, medical and dental civic action programs (MEDCAP and DENTCAP) programs were initiated to improve the health care of the populace of neighboring suburbs, who were poor Shiia for the most part. Things appeared quite promising at this time.

Other than the initiation early in December of foot patrols through Hay al Solum (universally known as "Hooterville" to the Marines) and Hadath to Baabda, and in February of jeep-mounted patrols through broader areas of Beirut in conjunction with other MNF components, the pattern of Marine activity remained essentially unchanged until the summer of 1983. The one exception to this was involvement of Marines in training various LAF elements, described elsewhere in this paper.

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Despite long exposure to the favorable portrayals of Israel in American media and the positive impression garnered by those who had experienced a ship visit to Israel, the Marine who would serve initially in Beirut had more immediate and vivid impressions of the manner in which the IDF had been conducting the siege of Beirut. Thus, the Marines who came ashore on August 25 to facilitate the evacuation by sea of thousands of PLO combatants not only largely were freed of the stereotype of Israelis but, to a lesser extent perhaps, were not so disposed as before to accept the Israeli portrayal of the Palestinians as dehumanized "terrorists". The dominant impression left by the experience of overseeing the departure of thousands of Palestinians was that the PLO was undisciplined but that Palestinians were people. When the same Marine unit that had taken part in the PLO evacuation was reintroduced in the aftermath of Sabra/Shatila, the predominant view of the Israelis had become rather negative. The massacre was, of course, the shaping event, but the manner in which the Israelis had comported themselves in Beirut contributed to the unfavorable impression, as almost all of the second-hand impressions of the Israelis received by the Marines were from the overwhelmingly Moslem inhabitants of West Beirut, who had suffered from siege, seizure, and looting by the IDF. There were far fewer Christian contacts to reflect the highly favorable way in which East Beirut had received the IDF.

The negative view of the IDF was reinforced when in December 1982 guerrilla groups began to hit IDF vehicular convoys moving on the Old Sidon Road with remotely detonated explosives, and the Israelis responded, as is their practice, by firing indiscriminately in all directions. A number of innocent noncombatants were wounded or killed by this fire in areas near Marine positions, further diminishing the IDF stature in the Marines' view. Meanwhile, the IDF regularly asserted that those who staged attacks on them had come through Marine lines and that the USMNF was deficient in failing to stop the attacks. Such assertions, in addition to being largely false, willfully ignored the symbolic role of the Marines and the fact that collocated LAF elements were responsible for enforcing security measures on the civilian populace. The continuing attacks on IDF convoys led to a regular morning sweep of the Old Sidon Road by Israel armored vehicles and infantry, which routinely fired into any potential ambush site in a "reconnaissance by fire." Israeli vehicles, including tanks, began to try to force their way past Marine checkpoints, producing a series of tense confrontations in early 1983. Israeli officials insisted that the only way to resolve the problem would be an IDF-USMNF exchange of liaison officers as befitting "two friendly allied armies in the field together." A January 28, 1983, meeting was held between IDF commanders and US officials and officers, including the MAU commander, to ensure IDF knowledge of USMNF positions and to agree to establish an emergency radio net, in which the US side was insistent that the LAF and other MNF components would be invited to participate. Notwithstanding this effort, incidents continued to occur, including apparent efforts by ill-disciplined IDF personnel to provoke Marines into confrontations.

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When Defense Minister Sharon was forced to resign following publication of the Kahane Commission report on the Sabra/Shatila massacre, Moshe Arens replaced him. Arens had left the post of Ambassador in Washington to take over the Defense Minister's portfolio and, as might be expected, was conscious of the negative image the behavior of the IDF was creating in the United States. This, and the fact that he did not have the same personal stake in Israel's Lebanese adventure, explained the observation of a high-ranking Israeli official that Arens was more interested in solving the problem of friction between the IDF and Marines than his predecessor had been (which also was, of course, an implicit acknowledgement of Sharon's perfidy in this situation). Arens visited Lebanon in early March, saw a USMNF foot patrol crossing the OSR, claimed the IDF had been unaware of this activity (which had occurred twice daily for three months or more), and used this to justify his effort to arrange regular contacts between the IDF and USMNF.

Ambassador Habib was then tasked by Washington with bringing to an end the dangerous series of confrontations between the IDF and the Marines, which in addition to generating prominent press coverage, had led the Commandant of the Marine Corps to address to Secretary of Defense Weinberger a letter (subsequently made available from DOD to the press) deploring Israeli provocations. Habib met with Arens in Tel Aviv, and a meeting followed in Beirut between the MAU Commander and the IDF commander resulting in the exchange of patrol schedules through LAF liaison channels, the latter at the insistence of the U.S. side, and the designation of the EUCOM liaison officer or the MAU Executive Officer as the point of contact should this be necessary with the IDF. This was as far as the relationship with the IDF developed; a rarely used radio net, infrequent and indirect liaison, and routine patrol information provided by the Marines through the LAF but not meaningfully reciprocated by the IDF.

That this arms-length relationship was less than satisfactory to the Israelis was understandable given the intensity of the US-Israeli relationship otherwise and elsewhere. Additionally, the IDF was experiencing the beginning trickle of what would develop into a continuous flow of casualties from guerrilla attacks, and the units sustaining the casualties understandably were upset that they were getting no help in containing the problem. Notwithstanding the genuine bases for differing perceptions and the immediate concerns of local IDF units, the hiatus in understanding stemmed as well from a number of other reasons, not the least of which was the general Israeli assumption - understandable in the light of the history of the relationship between the two countries - that the United States owed Israel its wholehearted support wherever the IDF acted and whatever it did. In this vein, much of what the Israeli leadership did and said concerning the relationship of the IDF and the Marines in Lebanon seemed designed to force the establishment of direct, intimate links on the ground and thereby associate the United States fully with Israeli policy in Lebanon.

The commanders of the successive MAUs that rotated through Lebanon (five all told, exclusive of a sixth that was offshore throughout its Mediterranean deployment and had only the task of providing a provisional company as the embassy's external security force) had a full appreciation of the complexity of the situation, and two of the three commanders whose tenures encompassed the period of deterioration in Lebanon were acutely conscious of the danger being drawn into any kind of a regular relationship with the IDF would pose to the success of their mission and the safety of their troops. Indeed, the MAU had cautioned their higher headquarters that the motive of the Israelis was to meet their own political and tactical interests rather than meeting any real concern for mutual safety. Noting that the USMNF had to avoid any impression of cooperation with an army of occupation, the MAU not only succinctly had stated the danger but foreshadowed the disaster to follow when it characterized its policy of neutrality and the public perception of impartiality as one of its greatest defenses against terrorism.

The belief that Israeli actions were explainable in many, if not most, instances as calculated moves designed to accomplish political objectives was not confined to American officers and officials in Beirut. The most succinct interpretation articulated elsewhere was that difficulties with the IDF in Beirut fitted the pattern of aggressive Israeli actions in its relations with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), UN Truce Supervisory Organization (UNTSO) and other non-Israeli-controlled forces, and that the Israelis in so behaving sought not only immediate political and operational advantages but also to ready a scapegoat for Israeli shortcomings, as well as to keep open the Israeli option of future non-cooperation on the grounds that past relations had been difficult. This interpretation concluded that the IDF motivation in harassing U.S. Marines was to create an intolerable situation that could then be brought under control only through regular, direct contact between IDF and USMC commanders, which then would be publicized by the Israelis to identify the United States with Israeli goals in Lebanon, to the detriment of broader U.S. interests there and elsewhere in the Middle East.

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Although there was no radical change in the environment for the Marines in Lebanon before the summer of 1983, a number of earlier events, lesser and greater, followed one on another that, viewed cumulatively, were omens of the frustration and failure to follow. The most significant in policy terms was the approach taken by the USG in its effort to secure the withdrawal of foreign forces, one which, perhaps unavoidably, fostered the Israeli policy of seeking a peace treaty with Lebanon, in fact if not in name, without regard for the interests of Syria or the concerns of Moslem confessional groups in Lebanon. The negotiation, in which the United States was a full participant, was not among equals but rather one in which an occupying power was dictating the terms of its withdrawal to the occupied country. The GOL was more than culpable in giving in to Israeli desires, in keeping with the Maronite dream of continuing Christian dominance reinforced by a de facto alliance with Israel. But the Lebanese approach relied, excessively as it developed, on the ability of the United States to have the agreement implemented. The terms of the agreement that later would emerge began to appear in backgrounded Lebanese press stories in March and had their impact on confessional group attitudes and in shaping general perceptions.

In its implications for the restoration of domestic tranquility in Lebanon, the LF militia clash with the Druze in the Shouf was the precursor of a message that turned out to be worse than anyone would have predicted. This clash, which began in the fall of 1982, was often audible and visible as it raged along the ridgeline overlooking Beirut. The IDF had occupied this area but seemed unwilling or incapable of bringing the violence under control, probably because Israel had an established relationship with the LF militia and were striving to establish a relationship with the Druze as well. No act so ill-served U.S. interests as the manner in which Israel handled the Shouf, and, in particular, the way it later handled the IDF's departure.

Apart from an unsuccessful November 1, 1982, car bomb attack against MAU beach facilities, the first act of violence against Marines was a March 16, 1983, attack with a homemade grenade against a Marine foot patrol in Ouzai, the coastal community north of the airport. Several Marines received superficial wounds and the attacker escaped. Another attack had occurred the preceding night against an Italian motor patrol and resulted in one death and several wounded. Available information strongly suggested that radicalized Shiia perpetrated both attacks, the forerunner of many to follow against the Marines.

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The event that seems, in retrospect, to have carried the most significant message for the United States was the truckbombing of Embassy Beirut on April 18, 1983. While such acts are often virtually impossible to trace to their source, the groups involved appeared to include an amalgam of various radical groups, including Palestinians and Shia, with inspiration and direction possibly from Iran and Syria. The timing and juxtaposition with other events strongly suggested a connection with the course of the Israeli-Lebanese negotiations.

The bombing of Embassy Beirut was followed shortly by Secretary Shultz' first visit to the area, during which he took a direct role in bringing the Israel-Lebanese negotiations to a conclusion. The agreement that resulted was signed on May 17, 1983, but it appeared even before the agreement was signed that Syria would have nothing to do with it, as its reaction immediately after conclusion of the agreement clearly established. Syria's opposition included its sponsorship of a new grouping of Lebanese opposition elements, now called the National Salvation Front (NSF), organized shortly after the agreement was signed. In addition to former President Franjiyeh, who was engaged in a blood feud with the fellow-Maronite Gemayel family, and former prime minister Karami, well-known as a reliable friend of Syria, the group included Walid Jumblatt, the leader of the Druze PSP. Nabih Barri, leader of the Shia Amal, while not a member was an announced cooperator with the NSF.

Through the spring of 1983 Marine foot patrols, whose passage through built-up areas previously had been received positively, noticed an acceleration of the progressive deterioration of local attitudes and a clear change in the makeup of those on the street. Beginning in the winter months, where friendly young boys previously had predominated, late teenage and more mature young men now manifested hostility toward the Marines, sometimes throwing rocks and often shouting insults, and Khomeini posters affixed to walls indicated the orientation of the populace. The situation became sufficiently tense that as the summer wore on the MAU suspended foot patrols to forestall an incident in which someone, Lebanese or American, might have been hurt. Meanwhile, the continuing clashes between LF Christian militiamen and PSP Druze fighters began to encompass the areas to the immediate east of the OSR, particularly the overwhelmingly Druze town of Shuwayfat and the Christian-inhabited suburb of Hadath north of it. Indirect fire rounds, mortar, rocket and artillery, began to impact in the vicinity of the airport, occasionally within the Marine area. This became more common in July and early August, and on August 10 the Marines responded for the first time, but only with illumination rounds to let the attackers know that their positions had been located. This tactic was only a transitory deterrent.

The Israelis meanwhile were continuing to take casualties from guerrilla attacks on the OSR and in their forward areas along the Beirut-Damascus highway. In the hope of reducing the cost of their occupation, the Israelis announced on July 20 that the IDF soon would withdraw to the Awali River. With an IDF withdrawal from the Shouf impending, the GOL, in order to extend its control over the first territory to be freed of foreign occupation, faced the prospect of having to dispatch into the Shouf a significant proportion of their deployable maneuver battalions, yet the increasing restiveness within Beirut, particularly in the southern suburbs (mainly Shiia inhabited), meant that even if a move into the Shouf could be negotiated there would be too few LAF units left to contain a possible - indeed probable - uprising by militia groups in the city. To secure its control of the city in anticipation of an LAF deployment into the Shouf, the LAF on September 28 launched a multibattalion sweep operation westward from the OSR through the southern suburbs to the airport road. This operation was only partially successful, and it precipitated a takeover of west Beirut by other militia elements. Then, in a well-conceived operation on August 30 and 31, the LAF regained control of west Beirut with minimal damage and light casualties on all sides. Throughout this late August skirmishing the Marines, who as early as the winter months had received occasional sniper rounds, received more frequent direct and indirect fire and suffered a number of casualties, including their first combat deaths.

Meanwhile, efforts continued to ensure that the long-smoldering LF-PSP fighting would not erupt into a full-scale war. But the Israelis, angered by the failure of the GOL formally to ratify the May 17 accord, would not cooperate by allowing the LAF to take over the area and the positions they occupied as the IDF evacuated them. After withdrawing material and supplies over the several preceding weeks, the IDF pulled out of the Shouf on September 3, 1983. The large-scale fighting that was feared in this circumstance erupted immediately. The PSP Druze fighters, reinforced by other Lebanese opposition elements and some Syrian-controlled Palestinians, attacked from areas long under Syrian control westward on the axis of the Beirut-Damascus highway. LF militia elements rushed to the key crossroads town of Bhandoun where the PSP and its allies, liberally supplied by the Syrians, with tanks, artillery and ammunition, decisively defeated the Christian militia. The LF then fell back to the ridgeline overlooking Beirut, where the LAF quickly deployed a brigade. Throughout this early September fighting, considerable fire was directed against the Marines, and additional casualties resulted. This produced the first naval gunfire counterbattery mission, with several rounds being fired on the night of September 7-8.

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At the same time, the LAF Eighth Brigade, and the LAF elements with it on the ridgeline, were being compressed by very intense artillery fire and frequent infantry and armor attacks into an area around the town of Souq al Gharb. As part of this fighting, artillery and rocket rounds continued to fall around the Ministry of Defense and the Presidential Palace, as well as near the American Ambassador's residence, located almost on a direct line between the two Lebanese facilities. Throughout this fighting, which continued at a high pitch through most of the month of September, the LAF also used its artillery (concentrated in Christian-controlled areas east and north of Beirut) with no concern for fire discipline. The LAF fire most often was area fire rather than directed fire, and its effectiveness was debatable. Moreover, the LAF implicitly assumed they could draw on an unlimited supply of artillery ammunition, leading to profligate rates of fire, equated by U.S. military observers with the volume anticipated for use by the entire U.S. Seventh Army in a major European conflict. An extraordinary U.S. logistical effort had to be launched to support the LAF with artillery ammunition, even including the provision of a portion of the Marines' supply.

For U.S. policy interests, the culmination of this fighting was the decision to employ US naval gunfire in support of the LAF at Souq al Gharb. This came about as the pressure on the LAF continued and General Tannous on September 19 informed the JCS Representative that the LAF artillery ammunition supply was down to 750 rounds, which, he claimed, was insufficient to prevent the defeat of the Eighth Brigade. There was, of course, no independent way of ascertaining how low LAF stocks were because for domestic reasons U.S. military trainers were not allowed to act as advisors by being with units as they engaged in combat operations. Similarly, no U.S. personnel were present at Souq al Gharb to assess the state of the Eighth Brigade, and the only visit by a U.S. military man during this period was insufficient to provide a real basis for judgment. Nevertheless, the JCS Rep was in very frequent contact via secure voice TACSAT radio with EUCOM, warning that the Eighth Brigade was about to be overrun. The MAU commander, who on September 12 had been empowered as "the on-scene commander" to make the determination to use U.S. firepower "to protect U.S. facilities", and who for a week had resisted repeated urging that he exercise that authority, was finally persuaded that he had no choice. It is a measure of the professionalism and character of the officer involved, and of his well-placed concern for the safety of his unit in its tactically unsound position, that he had resisted making the determination as long as he had.

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Two U.S. Navy ships then were tasked to fire in support of the LAF at Souq al Gharb and expended over three hundred rounds in a fire mission that the Long Commission report characterized as "timely and effective". The intensive fighting, however, continued for another week before the President's Special Representative, in cooperation with a Saudi diplomat, managed to arrange a cease fire. Fifteen months later, an LAF brigade is still entrenched around Souq al Gharb and still engages in firefights with PSP combatants.

The operation order for the second deployment to Beirut had included a condition, Provision Five, that enjoined the MAU to be prepared to withdraw in the event the permissive environment broke down. As is common, the operation order had been proposed by EUCOM and issued by the JCS at the beginning of the deployment. But when EUCOM tried to invoke Provision Five after NGF had been used at Souq al Gharb, they were informed by JCS that this provision had been deleted. Subsequently, the mission was redefined to permit firing in support of the LAF.

A constant problem that certainly added to the likelihood of Marine involvement in the burgeoning civil conflict that developed through the summer of 1983 was that LAF units that were in close proximity to the MAU positions were reacting to the manifestations of what, for them, was an insurrection in a way very different from the Marines; who were constrained by their rules of engagement (ROE). This was, of course, unavoidable, as the LAF is the military arm of the GOL, which could not escape its obligation to extend its writ as far as it might (leaving aside for the moment the means and methods that might be most appropriate). However, for the Marines the issue was one of avoiding that which was unavoidable for the LAF.

In addition to self-defense against a hostile threat or act, the MAU ROE's allowed force "in defense of LAF elements operating with the USMNF." Because, as suggested above, the LAF did not, and could not be expected to, adhere to the same ROE's, they became engaged in fire fights or artillery duels with factional elements. These engagements inevitably brought fire close to, or upon, adjacent MAU positions. The MAU showed great forbearance early in the period when hostilities developed by not returning fire that impacted nearby if it did not seem to be directed specifically against their positions. However, the extent to which fire by LAF elements brought down fire on the heads of Marines is a question to which there is no easy answer. In any event, it is entwined with the larger question of the loss of MAU neutrality that resulted from a number of acts and omissions, political and military, which progressively made the assumptions under which the MAU was deployed irrelevant.

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A disquieting development which reflected the desperation of certain Lebanese elements to deepen the Marine involvement in their country's agony was the fact, about which there is no doubt, that on some occasions during the deterioration the Marines received incoming artillery fire from areas under Christian control. Since the LF, as well as all of the LAF, artillery were sited in this area, it is not absolutely clear from which the fire came. Of the desired effect there can be no doubt; these rounds were an effort to provoke return Marine fire against Islamic militia positions.

During and after the September mountain war, which theoretically ended on September 26, 1983, casualties were inflicted on the troops of the MAU almost exclusively by rounds from indirect fire weapons (mortars, rockets, artillery) and by sniper fire. The exception to this was the long fight waged by Company A, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, which was at the Science Faculty when the mountain war began. Collocated LAF troops became engaged in fighting with militia elements in the immediately adjacent southern suburbs, and inevitably the Marines were drawn into the conflict. Although they sought to remain out of the fighting, the exchanges of fire soon acquired a momentum of their own that ensured the continuing participation of Company A. The saga of this single rifle company is little known but its performance was by all accounts truly professional. Although it lost five KIA and 13 WIA, there is no doubt that it inflicted casualties far in excess of those it lost.

Embassy Beirut sought through AMAL leader Nabih Berri to bring the fighting to a halt because the militia groups constantly reignited the fighting. Berri insisted that the elements engaging the Marines were not AMAL but fringe groups over which he exercised no real control, such as the Communist Action Organization and extremist Shiia groups. AMAL, then as now, was in competition with more radical Shiia groups for the adherence of the large Shiia population in the southern suburbs, and it was never clear whether Berri actually sought to end the fire fights, as in response to earlier requests he had said he would, or simply could not afford to seem too responsive to the Americans.

The continual fighting well after the ceasefire date led Washington to instruct Embassy Beirut to seek LAF protection for the Marines, invoking a provision of the September 25, 1982, exchange of notes under which the Marines were reintroduced after Sabra/Shatila. This provision, however, had clearly been designed to cause the GOL to dissuade the LF Christian militia from seeking again to enter the refugee camps and not for a situation of armed insurrection. As the Foreign Minister noted with incredulity when this approach was made, the LAF was fully engaged in fighting to protect itself and, in any event, were not the Marines supposed to be helping protect the GOL?

When, immediately following this demarche, the Embassy suggested to a senior MAU officer that the Marines would be well advised to reduce their vulnerability by, for example, pulling Company A out of the Science Faculty, this officer replied that to do so would be antithetical to the presence mission with which they were still charged, that the Marines could not abandon the LAF elements alongside which they had been fighting, and that the MAU could not simply "hunker down behind berms".

This reaction highlighted the impossible position in which the Marines had been placed by the active intervention of the United States on the side of the LAF through the use of naval gunfire at Souq al Gharb and the decisions which led up to it. Although that intervention had not been an isolated act but rather the culmination of a deepening U.S. involvement in the conflict, it symbolized the absolute end of any pretense of neutrality in the Lebanese morass, the same neutrality which percipient Marine commanders had regarded as their best protection. Yet, for reasons seemingly related to U.S. domestic political considerations, the efforts of responsible U.S. military men to have the mission changed to reflect the new reality were rebuffed, leaving a residue of unhappiness at the inability to put the Marines on a more appropriate footing. This was certainly a contributing factor to the tragedy which soon would follow.

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Sunday, October 23, 1983 and Afterward

At a little after 6:00 a.m. a 5 ton Mercedes dumptruck ran through a fence, jumped an 18 inch sewer pipe, and crashed through four layers of sandbags to enter the atrium of the civil aviation building, where it was detonated (probably by remote control) with the force of 12,00 lbs. of TNT. This wreaked a havoc that was fully chronicled in the press and on television. The almost simultaneous, identical attack on a building housing a French paratroop company showed that the attackers were capable of careful planning, sophisticated rigging of explosives, and precise execution of a difficult plan. Although overwhelmingly Marine, the 241 dead Americans included a number of U.S. Navy and U.S. Army members as well. Fifty-eight Frenchmen died in the attack on their building.

One responsible observer has noted that the attacks were brilliantly successful, in that they caused close to 500 casualties for the loss of only two men, the drivers of the attacking vehicles. Because the attackers regarded the Marines and French, armed foreign units that had been engaged in combat with elements of the Lebanese populace, as their enemies, it was suggested that it would be more accurate to characterize these attacks as "commando" operations rather than terrorist attacks.

The ability of the United States to project its power through strategic airlift was exercised within hours of the attack when an entire BLT headquarters at Camp Lejeune was separated from its body of troops, flown in toto, equipment as well as men, to BIA, and grafted on BLT 1/8, which had been shorn of its command and headquarters elements by the attack. An extra rifle company followed shortly afterward.

In reaction to the bombing, intensive security precautions were introduced that could not have been implemented earlier because of the felt need to carry out the "presence" mission. Serpentine berms were piled up, exclusionary measures for Lebanese introduced, the artillery battery relocated to a bluff above the beach, and Company A was scheduled to be withdrawn from the Science Faculty on November 8 to a ship offshore, where they were to be a floating reserve. The opposition, however, chose the evening of November 7 to attack Company A again, and the company lashed back with a cathartic storm of fire, venting some of their anger and frustration. No attempt was made to interfere with their withdrawal by truck convoy the following morning.

03:10:00

When the MAU, whose BLT headquarters was destroyed in the truckbombing departed on November 18, they were replaced by a MAU not only fully alerted to the dangers they faced but already blooded by their participation in the Grenada operation, to which they had been diverted while on their way to Lebanon. This unit had unusually high quality commanders of its combat elements, including a superb BLT commander whose conduct in the Grenada operation was a textbook example of aggressive, intelligent, and decisive leadership in a fluid situation. This officer concluded upon his BLT's deployment around BIA that the rule of proportionate force, by which return fire generally had been limited to the same type and volume of fire (rifle fire versus rifle fire, etc.) ought no longer to be applicable and that instead whatever type and volume of fire that might be needed to silence or suppress fire directed against Marines would be used. The application of this policy soon brought forth cries of foul play from the militias, but it also had its desired effect.

During the deepening crisis of late Summer 1983, some thought had been given to taking the MAU out of harm's way, with two possibilities being frontrunners. The favorite among the officers exploring this was to move out of BIA to a small coastal plain several kilometers to the south where the Israelis had prepared and used an expeditionary airstrip until their move to the Awali River line. The other possibility was to remove the MAU back to the supporting PHIBRON. No decision was reached because there seemed to be no alternative that would not have significant drawbacks.

After the truckbombing of October 23, a more serious exploration of alternatives was carried out including the possibilities of occupying high ground to the east or moving the MAU in toto to East Beirut. Once again, the adverse consequences, including the likely dissolution of the MNF, were adduced as reasons why a move elsewhere would not be consistent with carrying out the assigned mission. And occupying high ground would have required a considerably larger commitment of troops plus the near certainty of close ground combat. To these was added the strong sense from Washington that any other movement would be interpreted as a retreat in the face of attack. In his Middle East Journal article, Jim Muir succinctly stated the situation the Marines faced at this point, as follows: "The predicament of the Marines on the ground said everything. They were unable to move forward into an unwinnable battle, unable to stay put taking casualties for no purpose, and unable to withdraw without drastic repercussions for the U.S. position in the entire region." He also noted that "the U.S. Marines became no more than a superpower militia embroiled in the local squabble, their task reduced to that of defending their own presence."

DECLASSIFIED

The shock of the October 23 attack reverberated through the American populace and the Congress, leading to the appointment on November 7 by SecDef Weinberger of a DOD Commission (headed by retired Admiral Long) to look into the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the attack. The House Armed Services Committee also decided to pursue its own investigation. Both groups visited Beirut as well as various military headquarters, where they spoke with the commanders concerned, but not, perhaps, to everyone they should have seen. Although the Long Commission also interviewed both National Security Advisor Clark and his deputy, McFarlane, as well as Deputy Secretary of State Dam, they were not permitted access to State Department or NSC documents inasmuch as the commission's DOD mandate was not to examine USG policy.

The strong personality of Admiral Long and his firm views concerning the situation under review led to his direct involvement in drafting considerable portions of the report that the Commission was developing. When this report was released late in December 1983, it included language implicitly critical of the policy that had led to direct U.S. military involvement in the Lebanese conflict. Of particular import was the following conclusion "...U.S. decisions regarding Lebanon taken over the past fifteen months have been to a large degree characterized by an emphasis on military options and the expansion of the U.S. military role, notwithstanding the fact that the conditions upon which the security of the USMNF were based continued to deteriorate as progress toward a diplomatic solution slowed." "...these decisions may have been taken without clear recognition that these initial conditions had dramatically changed and that the expansion of our military involvement in Lebanon greatly increased the risk to, and adversely impacted upon the security of the USMNF." The Commission's report also commented that, in light of the fact that by late Summer 1983 the conditions upon which USMNF's mission was initially premised no longer existed, appropriate guidance and modification of its tasking should have been forthcoming from on high to enable USMNF to cope with the increasingly hostile environment it faced but noted that no such guidance appeared to have been given.

The Commission also concluded that "although it finds the BLT and MAU commanders to be at fault, it also finds that there was a series of circumstances beyond their control that influenced their judgement and their actions relating to the security of the USMNF."

DECLASSIFIED

RELEASABLE

From Nixon, whose veto Congress overrode to enact it, through Ford and Carter to President Reagan, no president has acknowledged the constitutionality of the War Powers Act. With regard to the initial deployment to Lebanon, President Reagan refused to invoke this law in such a way as to give Congress a role in reviewing the Marine deployment. The issue in dispute was under which of three sections he would notify the Congress - within 48 hours - that he had introduced U.S. forces, "imminent...hostilities," "equipped for combat," or "substantially enlarge" an existing deployment. Although many were dissatisfied with the President's failure to cite a section of the law when he informed the Congress of the initial deployment (thus following precedents of Ford and Carter), no member of Congress sought to force a withdrawal of the Marines. And, in fact, the President "informed" the Congress instead of "notifying" it, thus reinforcing the long-standing position of all administrations to date that the President's authority as Commander-in-Chief cannot be circumscribed.

The second deployment was the subject of another presidential letter "informing" the Congress, without citing any provision of the War Powers Act, that Marines were again being introduced into Lebanon. While assurances were given about measures taken to ensure the safety of the Marines, the President gave no time limit for the deployment but instead linked the Marines' withdrawal to the prior removal of foreign forces and the reassertion of GOL control. Congressional anxiety was not assuaged, and 14 of the 17 members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) on December 15, 1982, signed a letter to the President insisting that congressional approval be sought before any increase in the number of Marines in Lebanon or expansion of their role be undertaken.

The executive-legislative difference over the applicability of the War Powers Act remained quiescent until the deterioration of the situation in Beirut, notably the August 29, 1983, death of two Marines and the September mountain war, again brought the issue into focus. Various Congressional proposals were advanced, but the resolution finally adopted in a series of actions in committees and on the floors of both houses "determined" (in the absence of a notification by the Administration) that the "imminent involvement in hostilities" section of the War Powers Act had come into effect when the two Marines were killed. The resolution also fixed a time limit of 18 months from the resolution's enactment for the Marine deployment.

RELEASABLE

The President had not sought the Congressional authorization, affirmed his view that it was not necessary for the continuation of the deployment, and informed Congress that he would express reservations about its constitutionality. However, he had lobbied for enactment of the resolution (as preferable to various alternatives) and welcomed it as a "responsible, bipartisan" action. He signed the bill into law on October 12, 1983. The Secretary of State also made it clear in testimony that the Administration would not feel bound to withdraw the Marines at the end of the Congressionally-authorized 18 months, should they still be in Lebanon. The great political virtue of the 18 month period was that it largely would have finessed the whole issue of the Marine deployment until after the 1984 election.

The October 23, 1983, truckbombing led to turmoil in the Congress. But the resolution it had passed only 11 days earlier effectively had foreclosed the option of demanding the Marines' withdrawal either immediately or within some brief period. Additionally, the initial reaction widely felt was like the President's; to withdraw the Marines at that point would have been to reward terrorism. Nevertheless, sentiment began to build for a change in the Lebanese effort, which clearly had gone awry. The unsuccessful December 3 bombing attack against Syrian anti-aircraft positions on the western slope of the Lebanese range followed by the release of the critical reports of the HASC and DOD Commission gave considerable impetus to the mounting effort to curtail the Marines' stay. House Speaker O'Neill, whose support had been critical to passage of the resolution enacted on October 12, signalled his intention to support reconsideration of that Congressional authorization when Congress reconvened in late January. Several prominent Republicans also expressed doubt about the wisdom of our policy.

Although the Administration sought to forestall an adverse Congressional reconsideration, it reportedly was considering a pre-emptive action to wind down the Marines' stay in a phased withdrawal to be completed by mid-year when events on the ground in Lebanon forced its hand. The collapse of the 4th Brigade and definitive seizure of West Beirut by Moslem militias led to a withdrawal decision, announced February 7, and no further Congressional action was then required.



DELETED

In Beirut, coordination among the MNF contributors during the first deployment of the MNF was effected in the living room of the American Ambassador's residence when the ambassadors met, and around the dining room table when the military officers, including LAF representatives, met. The second deployment followed the inauguration of Amin Gemayel as President and appeared to be for an appreciably longer duration than the first deployment. Much more active than his predecessor, Gemayel involved himself with great frequency in the daily (later twice weekly) meetings of the MNF Coordinating Committee at the political level, in which EUCOM Liaison officers participated with the Ambassador or his DCM. The less frequent meetings at the military level involved the MNF component commanders as well as liaison officers (thus involving EUCOM usefully at both levels) in sessions chaired usually by an LAF officer. The conference room in the presidential palace where these meetings took place, along with an adjacent communications room, otherwise served as a situation room supervised by a senior LAF officer, where each component was represented there by a junior liaison officer equipped with a tactical radio by which he was in contact with his own component.

In addition, the MNF components exchanged liaison teams at their headquarters, a system that proved invaluable at times of crisis. Whether a unified command structure would have proven necessary, or at least useful, in the event a deployment beyond Beirut had come about remains the challenge never posed. Since that event likely would have led to the introduction of more forces, including additional national components, the issue certainly would have been joined. Given the diverse interpretations of the proper role of the MNF, and the probable French view that their commitment and stake would be pre-eminent, it is perhaps just as well that it was not necessary to seek an arrangement more binding than the exchange of liaison officers.

THE FRENCH

Undoubtedly France was unhappy with the USG for its June 15, 1982, veto of a French-sponsored UN resolution that called for a ceasefire, mutual withdrawal, and a role for a UN Force in Beirut. Adding to French dissatisfaction was the U.S. role in forestalling action on a late July French/Egyptian UN initiative that would have recognized the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination, and called for mutual and simultaneous recognition of the parties concerned. Perhaps a more immediate and galling reason for French dissatisfaction was the ongoing role the USG (in the persons of Habib and Draper) was playing, to the virtual exclusion of France, in negotiating the withdrawal from Beirut of the Palestinians and Syrians. France felt it had a unique role to play as the former mandatory power and long-time protector of Lebanon's Christian community that the United States---perhaps deliberately---was frustrating. Underlying the French unhappiness was an approach to the Middle Eastern problem quite different from that of the United States and which motivated the French to differentiate, but not dissociate, their actions from those of the other MNF contributors.

DELETED

preparing and embarking an appropriate contingent. While they initially sought U.S. sealift, they eventually used civilian ferry boats and WWII-vintage U.S.-made LST's to transport their contingent. Admittedly confused on the issue, they painted their vehicles white (as were UNIFIL vehicles), unlike the usual drab colors of other MNF contingents' vehicles. This color scheme (which included white helmets on the troops) and the feathers worn by the bersaglieri produced press ridicule and derision that stung the Italians. Compounding the concern this caused the GOI was the obvious refusal of the French to coordinate the arrival of their contingent with the Italians; instead, the French raced to be first, clearly seeking to score political points in the Arab world.

The sector allocated to the Italian contingent was the southern suburbs where the Palestinian refugee camps were located and much of the line of contact between the Palestinian/Syrians and the IDF. The task set for the Italians in the evacuation was to escort the Syrian 85th Brigade, with its equipment, and those Palestinian elements to be received by Syria, from West Beirut via the Beirut-Damascus highway to the Syrian border. Since this entailed the movement of armed units through the lines of their enemies and through occupied territory it was indisputably the most dangerous task given any MNF contingent. The Italian Army performed their mission without major problems, earning the respect of all.

In the second deployment, the Italians once again had responsibility for refugee camps and southern suburbs and thus were layered between the French in the city proper and USMNF at BIA. Now, however, the Italians returned to Sabra/Shatila only days after the massacre of September 16-18. ITMNF saw its responsibility as providing protection for the populace and sought from the outset to establish its benignity, never identifying itself (as FRMNF and USMNF did) with the LAF. As a consequence, ITMNF was regarded as neutral and impartial and never generated great ire from any factional group. Only one serious attack was staged against ITMNF, a March 1983 nighttime ambush of a vehicle on patrol that produced several wounded, one of whom subsequently died. This attack occurred within a few hours of the first attack against Marines, a homemade grenade thrown at a patrol in Ouzai. Although both MNF components suffered casualties, these were the last - as well as the first - ITMNF would incur, although it was in Beirut for eleven more months.

ITMNF rotated its troops periodically, as did the other MNF components. Unlike them, however, ITMNF did not rotate its leaders, and the same officer, Brigadier General Angioni, remained in command of ITMNF throughout both MNF deployments. The continuity this practice gave to the Italian effort in Beirut clearly was a major stabilizing factor. In addition, Angioni was an officer of remarkable qualities, extremely well-liked by his troops and highly-respected by other MNF leaders. The relatively great success enjoyed by Italy in the MNF endeavor was in large measure attributable to his leadership and to the similarly high quality of the Italian Ambassador. The government and people of Italy are reported to have taken great pride in the performance of ITMNF, and well they might.

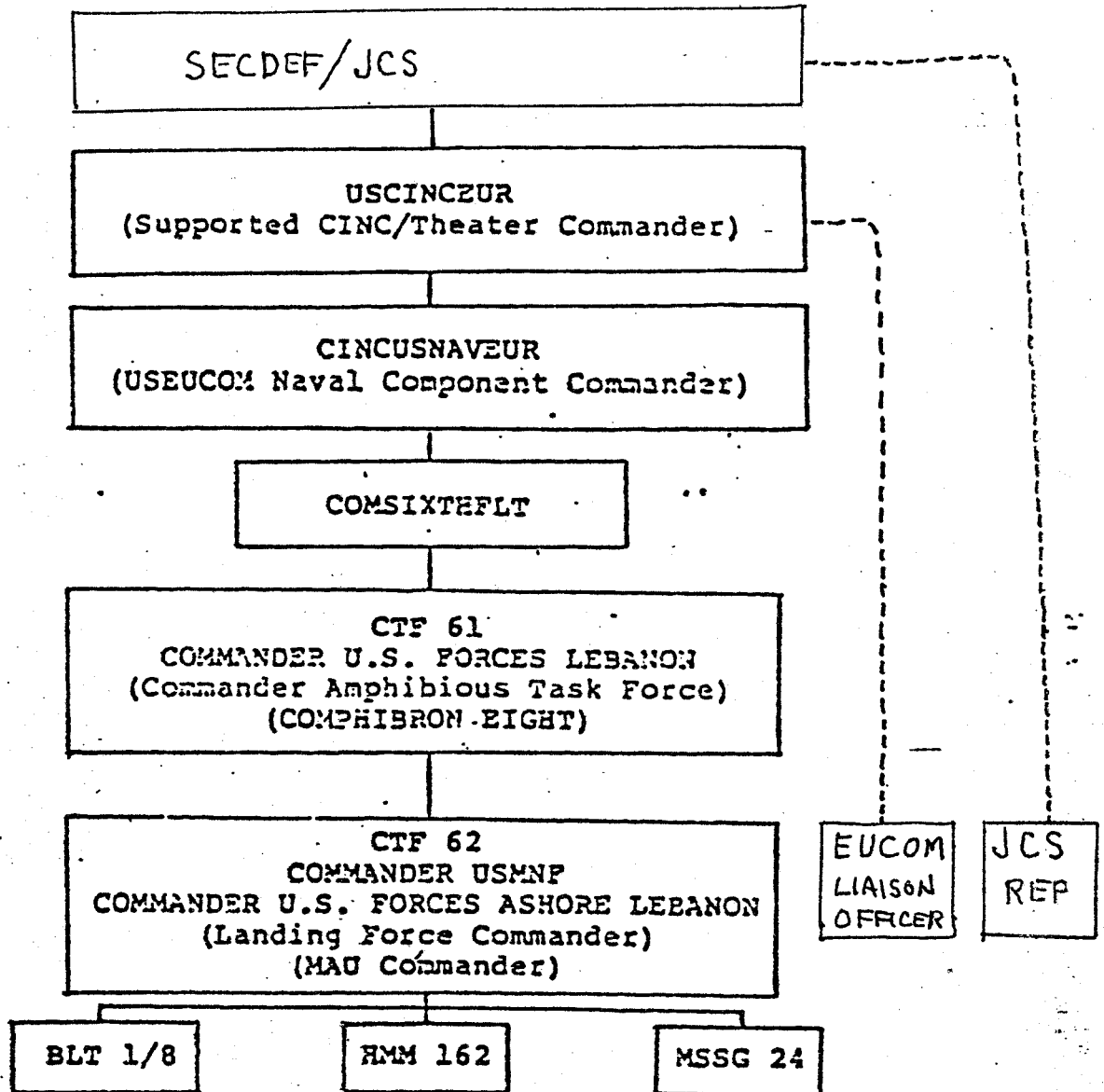
Having only months before emerged victorious from the Falkland Islands war, in which U.S. assistance of various kinds had been an important element, the British government doubtless felt that it ought to be responsive in some way when it was urged in Autumn 1982 to take part in the second deployment of the MNF. The financial burden of the Falkland war weighed heavily, however, and the open-ended nature of the MNF deployment promised to add significantly to the unprogrammed expenses of that distant undertaking, particularly if the potential UK participation were to be on a scale comparable to the other three participants (each of which had well over a thousand men ashore and, in the case of the French, over two thousand). The British solution was to play a role but at minimal cost.

As part of its garrison at the sovereign base areas on Cyprus (and part of its contingent in UNFICYP), the British Government had reconnaissance units equipped with small armored cars. The UKG deployed one troop of this description, consisting of somewhat over one hundred men. The UKMNF, being a small, mobile unit, did not wish to deploy in an area of responsibility, particularly if this led to collocation with another MNF element and a consequent submergence of the UK identity of the unit. Instead, they chose to set up a base of operations in a building near the inoperative tobacco factory across the OSR from the Science Faculty of the Lebanese University, where a company of Marines was located. From this base, they sent armored car patrols north via the OSR and throughout much of West Beirut. Immediately after the UKMNF moved into its building, the IDF established what appeared to be a battalion headquarters in close proximity to the British facility. Unlike the Americans, the British ran no particular risk in low-level contacts with the Israelis, and occasionally officers from the two units briefly would exchange information.

When President Reagan announced on February 7, 1984, that the Marines would be redeployed to the amphibious ships offshore, it signalled the effective end of the MNF. The British contingent immediately was alerted to move out on short notice and, in fact, departed its building in the middle of that night for Junieh, where they embarked the next day. Although the British contingent remained offshore for several days, it was soon sent back to Cyprus, whence it had come. Although it had been located in an area where disaster could have befallen it, the British contingent suffered no real casualty in its year in Beirut. The British had circulated widely in Beirut in their Ferret armored cars, but played no role in support of the LAF or, politically, the GOL.

Britain's participation had been nicely calculated to satisfy the importunings of the USG while minimally exposing the UK to political damage, its budget to further significant inroads, or its troops to harm. UKMNF was small in number but symbolically quite useful in expanding the MNF to four participants. The British deserve full credit for their astuteness in satisfying the USG in the manner they did while incurring no political damage and suffering no losses.

OPERATIONAL CHAIN OF COMMAND



The Military Chain of Command

The U.S. effort in Lebanon was characterized by a proliferation of means by which higher authorities kept themselves informed of, and influenced, events there. How this redundancy occurred and was played out on the political side is touched upon elsewhere in this paper. Here, the multiple military means are described to facilitate a fuller understanding of the unique nature of the military experience in Lebanon.

The formal chain of command for the USMNF went from Washington through U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe, USCINCEUR (the theater commander); Commander-in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Europe, CINCUSNAVEUR (the theater service component commander); Commander Sixth Fleet, COMSIXTHFLT; Commander Task Force Sixty One, CTF 61 (the commander of the amphibious squadron which transported and continued to support the Marines); to CTF 62 (the title of the Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) commander as a component of the Sixth Fleet.) It should be noted that the Marine Commander in Lebanon had three separate and distinct designations; his Marine Corps task organization title (MAU C.O.), his Sixth Fleet component designation (CTF 62), and his functional identity ashore (C.O. USMNF).

In normal circumstances, i.e., when a MAU is embarked on the ships of an amphibious squadron (a PHIBRON) for its deployment as a component of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, the MAU Commander remains co-equal with the PHIBRON Commander. However, when an initiating directive for an operation is promulgated, the MAU is subordinate to the PHIBRON. This is a rational and time-honored command arrangement to which there is no realistic alternative. Under Navy and Marine Corps doctrine this command arrangement historically has terminated when control of the embarked landing force (i.e., the MAU) has been passed ashore. But during the nearly two years of Marine deployment in Lebanon, the successive MAU's never were completely deployed ashore. Of the approximately 1,800 Marines (and Navy personnel) in a MAU, the strength ashore varied from about 800 during the August-September 1982 deployment to facilitate the PLO evacuation to about 1,700 during the spring and summer of 1983, even though the nominal strength of USMNF during the second deployment was 1,200. Throughout more than a year and a half of deployment ashore, the successive PHIBRONS---always with some Marines still embarked---remained offshore Lebanon providing uninterrupted logistical support, as well as the means rapidly to remove the MAU or evacuate civilians whenever such evolutions might be required. Two civilian evacuations, in June 1982 (actually before the Marines initially were deployed ashore) and in February 1984, and the withdrawal of the MAU, also in February 1984, were exemplary evolutions of their kind.

Notwithstanding the inescapable rationale for the continued presence of the PHIBRON commander in the chain of command, this arrangement was difficult both for him and for the MAU commander. To the extent that the PHIBRON commander was active in exercising command authority over activities ashore he was perceived by Marines as interfering in the rightful province of the MAU commander. A noteworthy example of this was the requirement that operational reports of Marine activities ashore be provided to the

PHIBRON C.O. for transmittal as CTF 61 (his Sixth Fleet component identify) messages. Each pair of component commanders worked hard to maintain an effective relationship, with some working harder and succeeding to a greater degree than others. In this connection, it would have been difficult to conceive of any PHIBRON commander coming ashore to criticize and direct the reordering of sentry posts and security methods. Yet the report of the Long Commission inferentially highlighted the anomaly of this command relationship when it criticized CTF 61, as well as the other commanders in the chain of command, for not having ensured that better security was provided for the building destroyed on October 23, 1983.

When the August 1982 deployment of Marines to facilitate the PLO withdrawal was about to be effected, USCINCEUR dispatched two Marine officers from the EUCOM staff to carry out liaison and planning functions in Beirut. This pair, with supporting communications personnel, continued in a number of incarnations throughout the Marine experience in Lebanon. Located within the Embassy chancery, the EUCOM Liaison Team served as the U.S. military representative on the MNF Coordinating Committee and, with their excellent communications capability, facilitated Embassy contact both with the MAU and EUCOM. Although the MAU Commander, or his Executive Officer, usually also attended the frequent MNF Coordinating Committee meetings, the EUCOM team always attended and reported their proceedings directly to EUCOM. They were also in constant informal contact via radio with EUCOM, reporting happenings and functioning as EUCOM eyes on the scene. This, too, was sometimes perceived as an intrusion on the domain of the MAU Commander, although this was an institutional problem that seldom took on any personal dimension inasmuch as all concerned in Beirut were Marine officers. While there were few problems in Beirut, the use of direct, informal communications between EUCOM and the EUCOM Liaison Team had the effect sometimes of denying to NAVEUR, SIXTHFLEET, and TF61 information that EUCOM factored into its decisions.

The Officers who served as members of the EUCOM Liaison Team gained as well as contributed, for when they returned to their originating commands (2nd Marine Division and FMFLANT provided officers when EUCOM was unable to do so) they brought back an intimate knowledge of places, personalities, and events on the ground and a sensitivity to the extremely complex Lebanese political situation and the broader regional political equation gained through daily contact with the Embassy, the various Special Representatives and negotiators who often were on scene, and from their international military contacts. It is a tribute to the quality of officer selected for this assignment that they almost always developed a keen understanding of the political dimension of the U.S. effort in Lebanon while ably, and sometimes doggedly, representing the EUCOM and U.S. military point of view. Not the least of their contributions was the heroism with which they acted during various crisis periods, particularly during and after the April 18, 1983, truckbombing of the Embassy.



Yet another channel of informal military reporting and direction was the JCS Representative, who was assigned from JCS/J-5 to assist the President's Special Representative. This officer, an Army brigadier general, acquired his own means of direct radio communication with the JCS, the exercise of which sometimes placed EUCOM in the position of receiving from the JCS instructions that were based on information or recommendations to which they had not been privy. Since the JCS representative maintained contact with the Chief of the Lebanese Armed Forces and was responsive to the President's Special Representative, his agenda sometimes differed from those of the MAU and the Embassy. That a certain disjuncture in U.S. efforts therefore emerged, especially during crisis periods, was no surprise.

Compounding the difficulty of reacting to a crisis so as to preserve or advance U.S. national interests, the reporting and recommendations of the JCS representative were a significant factor at several key decision points in the U.S. involvement in Lebanon. The adverse consequences of several ill-fated decisions point up, among other lessons, that the capacity to function effectively in a complex, foreign environment is not an automatic attribute of every military officer assigned that task. Rather, reliance should be placed on those officers whose assignments, training, or experience particularly qualify them, particularly if they have on-scene knowledge of events.

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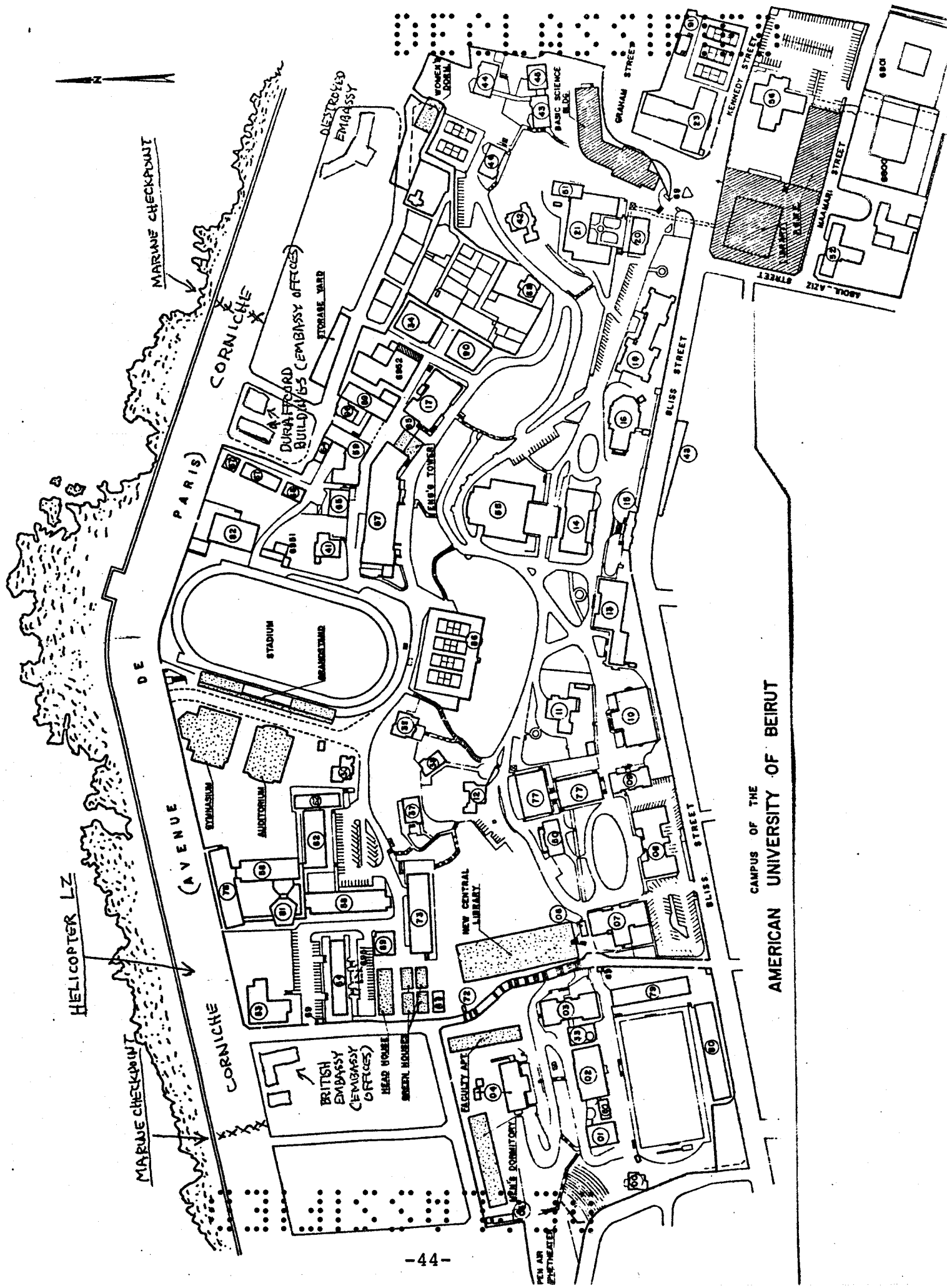
SPECIAL EMISSARIES

When a regional dispute arises, or becomes acute, a mechanism to which the USG has had frequent resort is the appointment of a special emissary. No one would question the usefulness, indeed, in some cases, the essentiality of having a representative who can speak directly with all the parties in a dispute, and this has often served a very useful purpose. However, the special emissary should, above all, have a stature that commands respect. This can derive from a record of past accomplishment - not necessarily diplomatic - or from acknowledged expertise on the area or problem in question. It can, of course, also be a product of the special emissary's official position, the most noteworthy example of which is the shuttle diplomacy practiced by Kissinger when he was Secretary of State.

Whatever its usefulness, the superimposition of a special emissary on American embassies in the countries involved in a regional dispute always creates an awkward situation for the accredited ambassadors and their staffs, whose standing with the host government inevitably is eroded because that government perceives (as it should) that the special emissary has special access and influence in Washington. The problem is intensified when he is involved on-scene in a long-term effort, rather than either factfinding or attempting to cope with an immediate crisis; then the special emissary's presence becomes routine and he is seen as "ordinary" rather than "special". This, unfortunately, became the pattern in Beirut.

The Lebanese situation saw special emissaries come and go, but at least one was always involved in the situation. The only successful player in this role, however, was Ambassador Habib, whose noteworthy accomplishments, the 1981 ceasefire between Israel and the PLO and the 1982 agreement on evacuating the PLO from Beirut, were marred subsequently by events beyond his control. Habib was not continuously involved following these events, and it is unlikely that any special emissary could have overcome the problems inherent in the combination of misperception and consequently flawed policy that marked the Lebanese episode thereafter.

03:15:00 10:30



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MARINE ROLE AT AMERICAN EMBASSY

A little-known but highly-valued aspect of the Marine deployment in Beirut was the stationing of a detachment of Marines at the Embassy as an External Security Force (ESF), a task that kept Marines there for fifteen months, including five and one-half months after the MAU was withdrawn and the MNF dissolved. There were precedents for this unusual utilization of Marines, the most recent having been the creation of a special company to protect Embassy Saigon during the Vietnam conflict, but it is not a role that is sought or welcomed. This reluctance is understandable in that, among other possible reasons, the host government tends to feel absolved of its responsibility, the Marines' legal status is anomalous, and the deployment of an element expected to engage in combat, if necessary, yet distant from any immediate support raises the spectre of a small force in danger of being isolated and overwhelmed. How the Force came into being, served, and departed is of some interest.

The receiving state is required under Article 22 (2) of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 "to take all appropriate steps to protect the premises of the (diplomatic) mission against any intrusion or damage...." The American Embassy detachment of Squad 16 of the ISF, the Lebanese equivalent of the Executive Protection Service, varied widely in effectiveness, depending on prevailing circumstances and the quality of its leadership. A strong officer who worked effectively with the predominant neighborhood militia (PSP Druze) kept the chancery inviolate during the Summer 1982 Israeli siege when no Americans were regularly present for two and one-half months. In contrast, the ineffectiveness of the ISF was a major factor in the devastating truckbomb attack on the Embassy on April 18, 1983.

Although French MNF troops, in whose zone the Embassy was located, responded immediately and magnificently in the aftermath of the attack, Marines from USMNF were dispatched to the scene almost immediately, and shortly after their arrival they relieved the French troops. (Later, eleven French military personnel received U.S. military decorations for their actions, the only such awards given since the Korean conflict.) The Marines secured the area and gave invaluable assistance in recovering classified material and, as they were uncovered by heavy machinery, the bodies of the victims. The C.O. USMNF, who had taken the initiative in providing Marines during recovery operations, also proposed to protect Embassy activities that were reconstituted in a nearby apartment building. No longer willing to depend on the Lebanese ISF, Embassy Beirut gratefully accepted the Marine presence. Thus began for the Marines in Lebanon a mission separate and distinct from the MNF.

Taking up an offer by the British Ambassador on the day following the truckbomb attack and---as Embassy officers subsequently learned---made without prior authority from London, elements of the American Embassy began, in late April, to occupy

one floor of the British Embassy. Responding to a discreet suggestion from the British that U.S. Marine protection for their Embassy as well would be welcomed, Embassy Beirut requested that the Marine ESF extend itself for that purpose. This was authorized. In addition, Embassy Beirut, recognizing that the collocation there of some of its elements could greatly endanger the British, requested that the Marines' rules of engagement be altered to enable them to stand post with loaded magazines in their weapons and rounds in the chambers and to be prepared immediately to engage any target that constituted a threat to the protected British or American facilities. This was implemented even while authority was being sought. Ten hours after Marines assumed responsibility for the British Embassy, in the very early hours of April 28, an automobile that had accelerated through a nearby ISF checkpoint toward the British Embassy was halted by immediate Marine fire and its occupants taken into custody by the ISF.

To facilitate defense of two structures separated by 600 yards, the inner lanes of the Corniche, a wide and divided thoroughfare which is the most important route through a badly congested urban area, was closed to traffic and obstacles to potential vehicular suicide bomb attacks were erected by Marine engineers. At the end of August 1983 when gatherings of antagonistic young men near Marine posts aroused apprehensions (well-founded, as it developed) that hostile actions were likely, the Embassy decided to close the Corniche entirely. The total closure was followed directly by the seizure of West Beirut by militias opposed to the GOL and by a rapid LAF operation to regain control of the area, during which time the Embassy---and the Marines---had to juggle a continuing relationship with the predominant local militia (PSP Druze), a participant in the insurrection, and the U.S. commitment to the GOL. This clash of interests reached a crescendo when the Embassy negotiated three separate ceasefires with the local militias to permit the evacuation to its perimeter of about 75 U.S. Army trainers billeted in a hotel 800 yards away where they, and their small LAF security force, were under siege by a Shiite militia. Each ceasefire was violated by the LAF as they were apprised in each case by the JCS Representative, whose zeal for intimate cooperation with the LAF exceeded his appreciation of the imperative need to remove U.S. personnel from harm's way. The last ceasefire was broken and the effort terminated, as Embassy vehicles that had picked up one-third of the Army personnel were pursued down the Corniche by 155mm artillery rounds fired by LAF batteries. This action had been foreshadowed by the LAF commander's earlier assertion, relayed by the JCS Rep in a telephone call to the Embassy, that he would "do what was necessary" if the Embassy pursued its plan to evacuate the U.S. Army personnel from the hotel strongpoint, since this action also would have entailed the evacuation of the LAF guard force. This was the first of three occasions when the Embassy and its Marine ESF came under fire from U.S.-furnished artillery pieces, manned by U.S.-trained crews, and firing U.S.-supplied ammunition.

The late August 1983 LAF operation to regain West Beirut was a necessary prelude to the deployment of some of the LAF's limited maneuver elements into the Shouf to fill the vacuum the imminent IDF withdrawal was expected to create and thereby, it was hoped, forestall a full-scale clash between contending Christian LF and Druze PSP militias. (In the event, the Israelis clearly were piqued by the GOL's reluctance to ratify the May 17 accord and conducted their withdrawal in such a manner that the mountain war of September 1983 inevitably ensued.) The LAF operation to recover West Beirut was preceded by a day and night of shelling, much of it air bursts to minimize damage while maximizing the impact on militia morale through sleep denial. This was a highly-successful tactic, as the operation proceeded smoothly the next day against minimal opposition. However, near the Embassy the approach of GOL infantry aroused the concern of the local Druze community that the Phalange elements, which predominated in LAF Ranger units, would massacre their young men in the local PSP militia unit, a not unfounded concern. The Embassy agreed to accept the surrender of the PSP militia unit with its arms on the clear understanding that subsequently they and their arms would be handed over to responsible LAF officers. This proved unnecessary because a local arrangement permitted the militia unit to melt back into the population. The outer lanes were then reopened.

Following the massive truckbombing of the BLT headquarters on October 23, 1983, a British explosives expert concluded that notwithstanding a blast wall whose construction was contemplated in the island dividing the Corniche, a similar explosion even in the outer lanes of the Corniche would devastate the British Embassy. In consequence, Embassy Beirut, after unsuccessfully seeking GOL agreement, but with the acquiescence of General Tannous, arbitrarily had the Marines close the outer lanes. Thus, a half-mile segment of the Corniche was totally denied to the residents of Beirut for the next nine months, giving rise to occasional expressions of public discontent as well as periodic indications by the Prime Minister (as always, a Sunni and a resident of West Beirut) that its reopening would be appropriate. Nevertheless, the Corniche remained closed until the effective transfer of Embassy operations to the Annex in East Beirut and the resultant departure of the USMC External Security Force in August 1984.

The American University of Beirut (AUB) fronts on the Corniche and occupies the entire area between the two clusters of buildings that from the April 18, 1983, bombing to the August 1984 transfer of activities to the Embassy Annex in a suburb of East Beirut housed Embassy activities and personnel. Over many years of intimate association, the Embassy and AUB had a symbiotic relationship that served both well. Nevertheless, from the outset of the Marine presence in Beirut, AUB was of many minds about this new aspect of American policy. Most welcomed the Marines to cultural events there while others, particularly those with fixed, negative ideas about the U.S. approach to Middle Eastern problems, regarded them as unwelcome. The students, overwhelmingly Moslem, posed no problem until U.S. actions made it appear that it was U.S. policy in league with Israel to support, indeed to reinforce, Christian hegemony. Thus the events of late August and September 1983 caused a perceptible hardening of student attitudes toward the

United States. From that time on, there was intermittent fighting between the MAU at BIA and radical Moslem elements in the southern suburbs, with whom at least some of the students sympathized.

AUB President Malcolm Kerr had reluctantly acceded to an Embassy request in May 1983 to use a small, university-owned building on the periphery of the campus and adjacent to Embassy-utilized buildings to house certain Marine ESF activities. The Marine presence there became an issue with some in the AUB community and was the subject of complaints to the Department of State from the Chairman of the AUB Board and concurrently from President Kerr (on instructions from the Board) to the Embassy. Following the October 23, 1983, truckbombing of the BLT headquarters, the imperative requirement to install concrete dragons' teeth to keep vehicles on campus from approaching the small building housing Marines, and the similar need on campus approaches to the British Embassy, were further reminders of the American intrusion on campus. President Kerr maintained a delicate balance, accommodating Embassy requests while placating his diverse constituency. His murder by unidentified terrorists on January 18, 1984, was a loss felt deeply by all who worked toward a constructive U.S. role in Lebanon and the Middle East.

The strength of the Marine ESF varied from a reinforced platoon and amphibian assault vehicle (AAV) section (about 60 men) initially to a force of an understrength company (100-115 men) in the latter stages of the mission. The October 23, 1983, destruction of the BLT headquarters building and consequent total closure of the Corniche provided impetus toward reinforcement. But the major factor leading to augmentation of personnel and equipment was the definitive seizure of West Beirut by Moslem militias in early February 1984. This event, described elsewhere, led to a savage artillery bombardment of the principal business area of West Beirut by LAF artillery, during which many rounds landed within and adjacent to the Embassy's perimeter, fortunately injuring no American. The danger to American personnel and the great uncertainty about whether the security situation would improve led on February 7 and 8 to the evacuation of Embassy dependents and drawdown of employees, followed on February 10 and 11 by simultaneous and coordinated British and American helicopter evacuations to ships offshore or directly to Cyprus of about 1,500 U.S., British, friendly third-country nationals and other persons. It was a flawless performance interrupted only twice by hostile fire that caused only one casualty.

In addition to its results at the airport, the Long Commission report on the bombing of the BLT headquarters building had an impact on the Embassy Marine ESF. Obviously stung by the finding of the Commission that there had been too little supervision by commanders up the chain of command, visits by flag/general officers became frequent, motivated by the EUCOM ukaze that there should be at least one a week. While this supervision might have been necessary or appropriate, it also produced what in military parlance is termed "micro-management," a propensity to indulge in which seemed stronger the higher the rank of the visitor.

This was somewhat understandable inasmuch as the military principle of unity of command had brought down the opprobrium heaviest on those at the apex of the chain of command.

The withdrawal of the MAU on February 26, 1984, left the Marine ESF as the only U.S. armed force in West Beirut, although headquarters and Air/Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) elements from the MAU as well as OMC training teams remained in East Beirut. A form of anarchy then prevailed in West Beirut where radical elements (usually Shiites) kidnapped or killed at will without fear of retribution. Available information indicated the likelihood of attacks against the Embassy by a variety of means and resulted in the addition of surface-to-air and surface-to-surface missiles to the array fielded by the ESF, with necessary increases in personnel strength. Had a suicide air attack been attempted, as thought possible on several occasions, use of the "Stinger" SAM would have been hampered by the fact that every aircraft that landed at BIA had to fly at the height of a few hundred feet directly over the perimeter because the initial beacon on the approach to BIA was located there. Distinguishing a potential attacking aircraft thus would have been extremely difficult.

The withdrawal of the MAU and disbandment of the MNF brought into bold relief the status of the Marine ESF as the military element likeliest to sustain casualties. This produced ever-increasing pressure on the Embassy from EUCOM through SIXTHFLEET and the MAU C.O. to find an alternative to the existing arrangement that would free the MAU to return to its peacetime routine of exercises and port visits. A concept was formulated that would have seen a welldeck ship with a helicopter platform (LSD or LPD) remain near Beirut carrying the rest of a reinforced rifle company and 4 helicopters. These were to be used, if required, to support or withdraw the Marine ESF while the bulk of the PHIBRON and MAU would have been freed to resume normal operations. It apparently was rejected because it carried the seed of an indefinite prolongation of a mission the military chain of command desperately wished to terminate. Instead, pointed reminders were given of the rotational date (early August 1984) when the MAU then in the Mediterranean was scheduled to be relieved by its successor and the imperative need for the new MAU to be freed of the Beirut embassy mission.

A number of factors went into the Embassy decision to move its operations in Summer 1984 to a newly-acquired annex in a suburb of East Beirut, leaving only a token presence in another newly-acquired compound several hundred yards west of the British Embassy. The ever-present danger, marked by one wounding in an assassination attempt and one kidnapping, that led to the restriction of Embassy personnel to the compound except for urgent business or other requirements, social problems with a notably hostile property owner, the need not to prolong indefinitely the American presence in the British Embassy, the markedly safer conditions in East Beirut, and the seemingly interminable nature of the anarchy in West Beirut were compelling reasons to seek an alternative. But the deciding factor, if not the most compelling

one, was the prospect that the Marine ESF could not have been retained beyond early August except with the greatest of difficulty. It was made abundantly clear to the Embassy that the military chain of command wished nothing to do with protecting the newly-acquired compound in West Beirut or the new Embassy Annex in East Beirut. The Embassy then secured authorization to constitute a locally-hired external security force but, lacking confidence in the capacity and commitment of any such force (or forces, for a Moslem group was formed for West Beirut and a Christian group for East Beirut), it sought Marine cooperation in at least minimal on-the-job training (OJT) for these groups. While OJT was arranged to take place for the West Beirut group within the existing Embassy compound, nothing would induce the military chain of command to put some Marines at the Embassy Annex in East Beirut for a few weeks to provide OJT there.

When Senators and the House leadership were briefed separately on September 20, 1984, concerning the second vehicle bomb attack, on the Embassy Annex, earlier that day, one of the House leaders asked whether if Marines had been present the attack would have succeeded. He was told that the attack would not have succeeded under those circumstances but that, regretfully, the Embassy could not have expected to keep a combat unit of the U.S. armed forces indefinitely. Notwithstanding that answer, no one who worked with the Marine ESF for its fifteen months of existence could doubt that the level and quality of protection they provided would have frustrated the second bombing attack on Embassy Beirut.

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CONCLUSION: "Able Men Carrying Out Difficult Roles in Uncertain Times".

U.S. support for UN Security Council Resolution 509, calling, shortly after Israel's invasion began, for unconditional Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, was soon forgotten by the USG as Secretary Haig determined to use the IDF's success to accomplish broad foreign policy objectives, including simultaneous removal of all foreign forces and reassertion of GOL rule throughout Lebanon. The U.S. decision to work closely with Israel in arranging for its ultimate withdrawal from Lebanon encouraged Lebanese Christian ambitions to perpetuate their predominant role through solidification and extension of their Israeli connection. It also permitted President Gemayel to avoid coming to grips with the long-festering problem of realigning the political structure of Lebanon to reflect more nearly its demographic realities.

If Syria were not a geographical, religious, and economic fact of life for Lebanon, or if Syria's interests had been taken into account in U.S. policy, there conceivably might have been a satisfactory outcome of the U.S. involvement. However, a common analysis is that the USG too-closely identified Syria with the USSR and chose to set it aside while seeking to negotiate Israeli withdrawal, on Israel's terms, when the GOI consciously delayed the process to frustrate any movement on the Reagan plan. The relegation of Syria to the same status as the Israeli occupying army, when the two preceding U.S. administrations had encouraged the Syrian presence in Lebanon, added insult to injury in Syrian eyes, giving it further reason (which it really did not need) to reject the quasi peace treaty. The USG, meanwhile, assumed too much in accepting that Saudi Arabia could, as it assured the USG it would be able to, bring about a Syrian withdrawal.

In contemplating the outcome of American involvement in Lebanon, a fundamental question arises about whether an outside government that is deeply engaged in the substance of a regional dispute can simultaneously participate in a peacekeeping force designed to separate the disputants. The MNF in the circumstances that prevailed in Lebanon did not meet the prerequisite conditions inasmuch as both France and the United States actively and deeply, if differently, played roles in the unfolding Lebanese drama. Italy and the UK were not so involved, and their forces fared far better than did those of France and America.

The role assigned to the MAU/USMNF was ill-defined, too broad, and without a defined set of conditions that would bring about its departure short of the millennial re-emergence of Lebanon. The felt need of the Administration to avoid invoking the War Powers Act led to a freezing of the stated mission of the MAU in circumstances that demanded a redefinition of its mission. This clearly was a contributing factor to the disaster that befell the Marines. Moreover, while it would have been possible to withdraw the MAU to the PHIBRON ships offshore following the September war, the truckbombing of the BLT headquarters in effect made it impossible to do so until other events intervened.

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The October 23, 1983, truck bombing of the civil aviation building at BIA, in which the BLT Headquarters was located, was the decisive act of the American involvement in Israel's adventure in Lebanon. Everything that preceded it was prologue, and the U.S. withdrawal that eventually followed it had, in retrospect, an inevitability that only a dramatic upturn in events could have forestalled, and that was not to be. Further events on the ground accelerated that departure by several months, to be sure, but the loss of 241 men in a single incident put into high relief the disparity between stated U.S. purposes and the inability of the USG, for reasons that go beyond the scope of this paper, to achieve them.

Yet what might have happened had the bombing been unsuccessful (or never taken place)? The level of casualties sustained to that point doubtless could have been sustained for some time, particularly as the Congress had committed itself to a further 18 months of Marine deployment. The prevailing view within the Administration, that the opposing forces were Soviet surrogates, probably would have led to a deepening U.S. involvement as the Moslem militias, backed by Syria, intensified their confrontation with the GOL of that period. The fracturing of the LAF on confessional lines doubtless would have occurred anyway, as it was the product of the centrifugal forces that appear to have overwhelmed whatever sense of nationhood that might, in an earlier time, have held Lebanon together. Thus, our posture of resignation and withdrawal when the LAF collapsed and the Moslem militias occupied West Beirut might instead have been one of defiance and active alignment with the Christian elements. Extensive naval gunfire and airstrikes against Moslem, and Syrian, forces would have been entirely possible in the atmosphere prevalent under such circumstances.

When the impact of this hypothetical scenario on U.S. relations with the Middle East, and with Italy and the UK, is considered, it seems entirely possible that the price paid on October 23, 1983, was less expensive than history otherwise might have exacted.

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GLOSSARY

- AMAL - The leading Shia militia organization.
- AUB - American University of Beirut. The best-known English-language school of higher education in the Middle East. Students are now mostly Moslem.
- AUH - American University Hospital. The teaching hospital of AUB. One of the leading trauma hospitals in the world.
- BLT - (Battalion Landing Team) - a Marine infantry battalion to which other elements (artillery, armor, armored amphibian, engineers, reconnaissance, etc.) have been attached to form a balanced ground combat team.
- ESF - External Security Force. The element of Marines assigned to Embassy Beirut following the April 18, 1983, bombing to perform external security, as contrasted with the traditional internal security role of Marine Security Guards.
- HMM - Marine Medium Helicopter squadron. An HMM, augmented by heavy helicopters, helicopter gunships and utility helicopters, forms the aviation element of a typical MAU.
- ISF - (Internal Security Force) - Also known as "FSI" from the French. The Lebanese police, who are responsible to the Minister of the Interior, traditionally a Sunni Moslem. The ISF is widely regarded as the closest thing to an unbiased security element, probably because they almost always shy away from confrontation with any armed elements.
- LAF - (Lebanese Armed Forces) - The official armed forces of the Lebanese state, including a small maritime patrol boat element and a few aircraft, all under Army command.
- LF - (Lebanese Forces) - The major Christian militia, built around that of the Phalange Party by sometimes forcible integration of other armed Christian groups.
- LHA - A combination well-deck ship and helicopter carrier with troop-carrying capacity of 1,000. Also used by VSTOL (AV-8) aircraft.
- LPD - Landing Platform Dock. A well-deck ship with a helicopter platform. Similar to, but more capable than, an LSD.



- LPH - Landing Platform Helicopter. An aircraft carrier designed for use by Marines and their helicopters with troop-carrying capacity of 600. Usuable by VSTOL aircraft.
- LSD - Landing Ship Dock. A well-deck ship with a helicopter platform. Similar to, but less capable than, an LPD
- LST - Landing Ship Tank. Large landing craft with bow opening doors for off-loading tracked and wheeled vehicles either over a causeway or directly onto a beach.
- MAU - Marine Amphibious Unit. The smallest Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTAF). Built around a BLT, HMM, and MSSG and typically numbering about 1,800 men.
- MEA - Middle East Airlines. The Lebanese flag, privately-owned, passenger-carrying airline.
- MSR - Main Supply Route. A road over which the bulk of the material required to sustain a given force is to move.
- MSSG - (Marine Service and Support Group). The combat service support element of a MAGTAF; in this case a MAU, medical, dental, supply, etc.
- MTT - Mobile Training Team. A group of U.S. military members assigned on a short-term, temporary basis to train foreign military personnel in a specific skill (e.g. maintenance of M48A5 tanks).
- OMC - Office of Military Cooperation. A "mini MAAG" whose task it is to facilitate the provision of U.S. military equipment, supplies and training to the armed forces of another country.
- OSR - (Old Sidon Road). The road which deviated from the coastal road at Khaldeh and led northward east of BIA to Galerie Sieman. Used as part of the Israeli MSR until the IDF evacuation from the Shouf in September 1983.
- PHIBRON - Amphibious Squadron. A 3 to 5 ship element (depending upon whether it includes an LHA or LPH) of ships designed and built to transport and land Marines, in this instance a MAU.
- PSP - Progressive Socialist Party. The main grouping of Druze; a military and social services framework for the Druze as well as a political entity.

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- ROE - Rules of Engagement. Carefully designed sets of instructions on when and how a military element may use its weapons.
- TMA - Trans-Mediterranean Airlines. The Lebanese flag, cargo-carrying, privately-owned airline.

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