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# Political Change and the Outbreak of Civil War: The Case of Lebanon

MARWAN GEORGE ROWAYHEB

*Although the Lebanon of post 2005 is similar in many respects to the Lebanon of the 1950s and 1970s, this article demonstrates that between 2005 and 2011 the country was in less danger of the outbreak of civil war than in 1958 or in 1975. The political circumstances that prevailed in 1958 and in 1975 had made the outbreak of a civil war in the interest of political actors. The introduction of some of the reforms introduced by the Taif Accord since 2005 made many actors more likely to use constitutional methods to resolve conflicts. When these methods failed, the protests were either peaceful or violent, but over short periods of time. On many occasions these protests brought the country to the brink of civil war. Nevertheless, these protests did not escalate into large-scale or long-term communal militant violence. This was not because of a sense of war weariness but because of the influence of the prevailing political circumstances that made the outbreak a civil war appear to be a strategic error.*

## INTRODUCTION

With the assassination of the former prime minister Rafik Hariri, 2005 marked a turning point in the history of Lebanon. Following this assassination, pressure from Lebanese political parties and the international community forced Syria to withdraw its military forces from Lebanon, after a presence that had lasted for three decades. Upon this withdrawal, hopes were raised that peaceful coexistence and democratic change awaited the Lebanese. However, the country faced a critical crisis, with the Lebanese becoming divided into two coalitions: the 14th March and the 8th March movements.<sup>1</sup> On many occasions, the Lebanese tried to resolve their political differences peacefully by the use of constitutional measures. However, when these constitutional channels led to governmental gridlocks, the contending parties moved to either violent or peaceful street protests.

The political situation surrounding the protests was very tense and at times led to these protests bringing the country to the brink of a civil war, as will be discussed below.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, not a single protest escalated into a civil war. The protestors worked hard not to allow the situation to take the form of an inter-communal conflict. This article argues that it was not war weariness that prevented the protestors from allowing their protests to escalate into a civil war. Why then did the situation not escalate into prolonged violence? Comparing the circumstances that

prevailed in the Lebanon of 1958 and the Lebanon of 1975 with the ones of post-2005 Lebanon can be enlightening for explaining why political violence escalates in certain circumstances but not in others.<sup>3</sup> As will be demonstrated in this article, the civil war of 1958 and the civil war of 1975 occurred after political deadlocks and waves of street protests. The nature of Lebanon's sectarian political system and the way it divided political power between the president, the prime minister and the parliament had made the option of protesting violently a more effective tactic for the contending factions than the available peaceful or constitutional measures. In 1958 and 1975, respectively, each of the contending factions believed that it could achieve what it wanted by military means since the balance of power and the balance of military might appeared as if it would allow it to do so.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, as will be argued below, the position of the Lebanese Army and the assistance provided by foreign powers had encouraged the Lebanese to go to war against each other in both the earlier periods.

Although, few of the reforms introduced by the Taif Accord of 1990 had encouraged the Lebanese factions of the 14th of March movement and the 8th of March movement between 2005 and 2011, respectively, to resolve their differences peacefully and made them more likely to use constitutional methods when they had claims against each other, it was very possible that they would have fought to impose their will over their opponents but chose not to do so.<sup>5</sup> This article will show that it was not in the strategic interest of the majority of the Lebanese factions from the 14th of March movement or from the 8th of March movement to start a civil war due to the circumstances that were determined by the balance of power and balance of military might that had prevailed in Lebanon since 2005. The balance of power and the balance of military might made most Lebanese parties feel they could not win or achieve what they wanted if the situation had escalated into a civil war. As will be demonstrated, the prevailing balance of military might that was greatly in favour of Hezbollah and its allies from the 8th of March movement had deterred Hezbollah's opponents from venturing into a military confrontation with it when they were protesting in 2005 and in 2011. On the other hand, although Hezbollah, the most powerful faction within the 8th of March movement, had the balance of military power in its favour, it was not in its interest to engage in communal violence or spark a civil war with its opponents from the 14th of March movement given the risks this would have posed to its political interests. As will be argued below, the balance of power that prevailed in Lebanon among the contending factions had restricted Hezbollah's military advantage and had limited its ability to achieve what it wanted simply by relying on military might alone.

This article will demonstrate that developments within the Sunni, the Christian and the Druze groups did not allow the factions within these communities that were still prone to venture long-term communal violence to do so. The organisational capacity of the 14th and 8th March movements and the responsiveness of the protestors to their leaders' requests allowed for a strong element of control over the crowds during the protests.

Furthermore, one could still argue that the actions of actors, other than the protestors, could have caused these protests to turn into large-scale and long-term communal violence. This article will argue that the inability of the government to stifle the protests, the clear decision of the Lebanese factions not to react violently to their opponent's protests, the role played by the army during the protests and particular foreign influences all facilitated and encouraged the protestors to remain largely peaceful.

Although violence in Lebanon has been studied extensively by scholars, the period post 2005 has not yet received great attention and only a few works have covered it.<sup>6</sup> Most studies of political violence have focused on the civil war period of 1975.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, there are only few studies on the student protests that took place in the 1970s.<sup>8</sup>

This article will begin with a short description of the events that led to the outbreak of the civil war of 1958 and the civil war of 1975. The second section will show the extent of how tense the political situation in Lebanon was which made the probability of the outbreak of civil war very high between 2005 and 2011. The remainder of the article will then analyse the protests of the 14th of March movement of 2005, the protests of the 8th of March movement from 2006 to 2008 and the protest of the Future movement of 2011 to try and to understand why large-scale violence failed to occur.

#### THE CIVIL WARS OF 1958 AND 1975: A SHORT ACCOUNT

##### *The Civil War of 1958*

In 1958, protests against President Camil Chamoun took place prior to the outbreak of the civil war. The opposition, consisting mostly of the Sunnis and the Druze, claimed that Chamoun did not respect Lebanon's National Pact of 1943 when he allied himself with the US and the Britain.<sup>9</sup> The balance of power, the balance of military might and foreign assistance did not deter any of the contending factions from using violence to achieve their ends or to defend what they had previously won. Each believed that violence was the best method to acquire political gains. The opposition had the support of Syria and Egypt, provided by means of the Lebanese Syrian borders, with weapons and ammunitions.<sup>10</sup> The position adopted by the Lebanese Army and the security forces at the time restricted the ability of Chamoun to deal with the protestors.<sup>11</sup> The army's leadership believed that the army, like the wider Lebanese society, was influenced by sectarianism and that any intervention from its side against the protestors could anger the Sunni soldiers, who might defect and join the protestors.<sup>12</sup> The army's position had kept the balance of power the way it was since any intervention on the side of Chamoun might have discouraged the opposition from going to war against Chamoun.

The political system allowed the opposition few peaceful options to get what it wanted from Chamoun. The opposition at that time believed that Chamoun was not willing to modify his foreign policy unless he was forced to.<sup>13</sup> The elections of

1956 had resulted in a pro-Chamoun parliament, in which the opposition had managed to win very few seats.<sup>14</sup> Constitutionally, Chamoun had the power to designate any Sunni whom he wanted to serve as his PM without referring to the parliament.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, Chamoun had the support of the majority of the Christians, who were willing to fight a long-term communal battle to defend him. On the other hand, having accepted the Eisenhower doctrine, Chamoun was assured that the US would intervene if the protestors tried to topple his regime by the use of violence.<sup>16</sup>

From the month of February and until the outbreak of the civil war in May 1958, the opposition protested violently against Chamoun, after he was accused of attempting to extend his presidency for a second term.<sup>17</sup> This short civil war ended in July 1958 when the US marines landed in Beirut and, with the approval of Nasser, mediated an end to the crisis. Chamoun was allowed to finish his term on condition that he would not use his influence to force a constitutional amendment to extend his term for another six years.<sup>18</sup>

### *The Civil War of 1975*

The political situation in 1975 was very turbulent. The country was divided along sectarian lines and the divisions were difficult to resolve. As in 1958, the balance of power and military might that prevailed encouraged the contending factions to go to war against each other since each faction believed that war would bring about its desired ends. The majority of Lebanese Muslims and many Lebanese Arab nationalists and leftists grouped under the umbrella of the Lebanese National Movement (LNM), supported the Palestinian military presence in Lebanon and called for the introduction of political reforms.<sup>19</sup> They had the backing of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and many Arab states, like Syria and Libya.<sup>20</sup> The political system, as in 1958, discouraged peaceful avenues for change. On the other hand, the majority of the Christians opposed completely the demands of the LNM and the Palestinians. They had the support of many conservative Arab states that were not happy to see the PLO and other radical groups become powerful in Lebanon. The Cold War also made its mark on Lebanon and the war it created by proxy over Lebanese territories raised the tension between the contending factions. All types of arms were brought into Lebanon by the various factions, bolstering their militias and training camps.<sup>21</sup>

The situation seriously and violently deteriorated after the events of 26 February 1975, in Sidon, when protestors clashed with the army and the security forces, and two protestors were killed and seven were injured; among the dead was Maarouf Saad, a well-known powerful Sunni leader.<sup>22</sup> The situation was very volatile with the Lebanese Army unable to act due to disagreements about its role, the protestors' lack of trust in its command and the sectarian divisions among its soldiers and leadership.<sup>23</sup> A few months after the protest of Sidon and a few hours after a deadly attack on a Palestinian bus in East Beirut on 13 April 1975, the Lebanese civil war of 1975 was ignited. It was to last for more than 15 years.

## POLITICAL TENSIONS AND THE LEAD UP TO THE POST-2005 PROTESTS

The political situation that surrounded the protests of the post-2005 period was as threatening as the ones of 1958 and 1975 and made the possibility of the outbreak of a civil war quite possible. As mentioned earlier, Lebanon was divided into two major coalitions, with these divisions, in most cases, taking a sectarian dimension. The Lebanese Christians were divided between the two coalitions; the 14th of March group was dominated by the Sunni of the Future movement and the 8th of March group by the Shi'a of Hezbollah and the Amal movement. The major sources of disagreement were Lebanon's foreign relations and ties, the weapons of Hezbollah and the Special Tribunal established in relation to the assassination of Hariri. Economic problems also increased the suffering of the Lebanese and led to major social protests and upheavals, contributing to the instability. Strikes, protests and demonstrations against the economic policies of the Lebanese government occurred frequently.<sup>24</sup>

Bombings and assassinations occurred frequently. More than six explosions occurred during this period, targeting Christian neighbourhoods that were known for their strong opposition to Syria.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, there were more than 12 assassinations of prominent leaders and journalists known for their opposition to Syria.<sup>26</sup> Communal violence in communally mixed areas took place on a weekly basis. Ain Roumaneh in east Beirut, Bourj Abi Haidar and Mazraa in West Beirut and Jabal Mouhsin in the city of Tripoli are good examples here.<sup>27</sup> Personal weapons in Lebanon were commonly available to the Lebanese and the arms market was prospering.<sup>28</sup> An opinion poll conducted in 2007 revealed that 50 per cent of the respondents either owned personal weapons or had access to weapons, and more than 40 per cent were willing to pick up arms to defend themselves.<sup>29</sup>

The post-2005 era witnessed a destructive war with Israel, following a pattern since the 1960s. A 33-day war between Israel and Hezbollah occurred in 2006, which resulted in more than 1,000 Lebanese dead and the destruction of significant amounts of Lebanon's infrastructure and private property.<sup>30</sup> Israel's war on Lebanon was triggered by the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah. The 14th of March faction held Hezbollah responsible; on the other hand, Hezbollah claimed that it had the right to act as it did since Israel did not accept to release the Lebanese detained in its prisons.

As in the 1960s, clashes between the Lebanese Army and the Palestinian militias continued to take place. During the summer of 2006, a terrorist organisation named Fateh al Islam and linked to the al Qaida terrorist movement attacked a unit of the Lebanese Army and killed many of its soldiers. The Lebanese Army reacted by attacking Naher al Bared Palestinian camp in the north of Lebanon, where fighters and leadership of this movement were seeking refuge. After months of heavy fighting, the Lebanese Army, with extreme difficulty, managed to take over the camp. Fateh al Islam fighters were either dead or caught, or they managed to escape. Around 500 individuals from the Lebanese Army, Fateh al Islam and the Palestinians were dead, and more than 30,000 Palestinians were displaced.<sup>31</sup>

Although in 2007 Hezbollah did not fully approve of the Army's fight against Fateh al Islam, claiming that it might put Lebanon and its army in direct confrontation with al Qaida, the Lebanese Army had the support of most factions and parties.<sup>32</sup>

The Lebanese National Dialogue that was started at the end of 2005 by the speaker of parliament and included all contending Lebanese factions was put on hold at the end of 2006 as a result of strong disagreement on the issue of Hezbollah's weapons. Although it was reactivated by President Michel Suleiman in 2008, it was put on hold again in 2010. Furthermore, no serious public and national reconciliation and memorialisation was made by the Lebanese state to erase the residues of the 1975 civil war.<sup>33</sup> A few attempts were made here and there, but there was no follow-up on these attempts.<sup>34</sup>

The background of many of the leaders in the post-2005 era, and the climate of impunity, was another factor that made the possibility of the outbreak of a civil war very high. Many of the ex-warlords and militia men who had committed serious human rights abuses, communal violence and assassinations were not only left without punishment, but also continued to be active politically within their parties and managed to become ministers, members of parliament or members of the security forces.<sup>35</sup>

Post-2005 Lebanon also continued to be a terrain, where foreign powers challenged each other by proxy. The US continuously supported the dismantling of Hezbollah's arsenal and the Special Tribunal for Hariri. It also called for and encouraged the Lebanese to face Syria's and Iran's influence in Lebanon, demonstrated by their connection to Hezbollah.<sup>36</sup> The US pressed successive Lebanese governments to disarm Hezbollah, as dictated by the Security Council resolutions 1559 and 1701 and as a condition for Lebanon receiving its military and financial assistance.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Saudi Arabia and Egypt were not happy to see Iran's influence in Lebanon expanding.<sup>38</sup> Syria and Iran were providing Hezbollah and its Lebanese allies with all types of support and assistance.<sup>39</sup> In return, Hezbollah was expected to strongly oppose the US influence in Lebanon and to do whatever they could to obstruct Lebanon's commitment to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon that was expected to indict Syria.<sup>40</sup>

#### THE 14TH MARCH PROTESTS

On 20 February 2005, and in reaction to Hariri's assassination, the 14th of March coalition held a meeting and officially launched its protest movement known as 'The Cedar Revolution'.<sup>41</sup> The major objectives of the protest were: the resignation of Omar Karame's government and President Emile Lahoud (whom they considered responsible for the assassination of Hariri), the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, the establishment of an international commission to investigate the assassination of Hariri, the resignation of the Lebanese security officials who were accused of masterminding the assassination and the organisation of free and fair parliamentary elections during the summer of 2005.<sup>42</sup> In principle, the major objective of the protest of the 14th of March coalition was to demonstrate that the

majority of the Lebanese wanted Lahoud to resign and the Syrian army to leave Lebanon.<sup>43</sup> To achieve these ends, they needed to attract to their protest a large number of people from all sects, ages, genders and social backgrounds.<sup>44</sup> Without doubt, a peaceful protest was to be the best means to achieve this end since peaceful protests attracted more people than violent ones.

The protest movement achieved most of its objectives except for the resignation of Lahoud, who had the support of Hezbollah and most of the factions within the 8th of March movement. The balance of military power then greatly favoured Hezbollah. The 14th of March movement therefore had no other choice but to protest peacefully. It was probable that Hezbollah would defend Lahoud if violence means were used to remove him. Since 2005, the factions and parties affiliated with the 14th of March movement collectively admitted that the balance of military power was in Hezbollah's favour.<sup>45</sup> By 2005, Hezbollah had a well-trained and highly armed militia. Hezbollah was allowed by the successive Lebanese governments to retain its arsenal in order to lead the resistance against Israel's occupation of the South of Lebanon.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the Maronite Patriarch, who supported the 14th of March coalition, opposed the removal of any Maronite president by force.<sup>47</sup>

The 14th of March coalition successfully organised many peaceful demonstrations in which hundreds of thousands participated; the largest one took place on 14 March 2005, and hence, the name of the group. The leadership of the protest movement called on the Lebanese to strike peacefully on a number of occasions.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the 14th of March movement organised a sit-in that lasted for 68 days in downtown Beirut. Food, water, tents and linen were provided to the protestors.<sup>49</sup> Marshals were entrusted to keep the security and order within the location of the sit-in around the clock.<sup>50</sup> Activities were organised to keep the protestors entertained and to interest them in attending. Concerts, lectures, games and other social activities were organised.<sup>51</sup>

The assassination of Hariri could have easily led to an outbreak of communal violence. Hariri was the most powerful Sunni leader, and he had managed since the end of the civil war to raise his community to a powerful position locally, regionally and internationally. His assassination was a major shock to the Sunni community.<sup>52</sup> A large number of Christians and Druze were affected as well and took these protests as an opportunity to protest against Syria and the Lebanese political regime. Similarly, the assassinations of Samir Kassir, George Hawi, Jibran Tueni, Pierre Gemayel and others also did not lead to violence or revenge, and the Lebanese reacted by protesting peacefully.<sup>53</sup> It is interesting to note here, in comparison, that the assassinations of Maarouf Saad in 1975, Kamal Jumblat in 1977 and Bashir Gemayel in 1982 all led to violent protests.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, in any highly tense political situation for the protest to remain peaceful, much depends on the organisational skills and capacity of the leadership of the protest and on the responsiveness of the protestors to their wishes and instructions. In the protest of 2005, the Future movement, led by the Hariri dynasty, was the faction that played the most vital role in organising these protests by providing the logistics and financial resources for the protestors. Other factions like the Lebanese

Forces, the Kataib and the Free Patriotic movement, the Future movement, contributed human and financial resources to these protests. During the demonstrations, buses were made available to transport protestors from all areas of Lebanon; marshals were assigned in protest locations and all over the roads leading to the protest locations.<sup>55</sup> Heavy campaigns on television and radios, in newspapers and on billboards called on the Lebanese to protest peacefully.<sup>56</sup> In the protest locations, food and water were provided.<sup>57</sup> Without the positive response of the protestors it would have been difficult for the organisers to keep a large crowd peaceful in a highly tense political situation.<sup>58</sup> It should be noted here that in all these protests, protestors of all ages, genders and of different social backgrounds participated.<sup>59</sup> Most of them were hopeful that their peaceful demonstrations would lead to change.<sup>60</sup> The protestors looked enthusiastic and joyful.<sup>61</sup> Most of them expressed concern that they did not want to see the outbreak of another civil war.<sup>62</sup> The major slogans raised by the protestors were that 'peace will bring change' and that there would be 'no return to civil war'.<sup>63</sup> Even when tensions were at their highest point directly after Hariri's assassination, the protestors managed to control their anger and keep their protest peaceful.<sup>64</sup>

The position of the protestors from the Lebanese Army also played a role in keeping the protest peaceful. Prior to 2005, a consensus on the role, ideology and achievements of the Lebanese Army was lacking.<sup>65</sup> In 2005, the Lebanese started to regain their trust in the army and their awareness that it would not use violence against the protestors which in turn encouraged them to participate in all the protests of the 14th of March movement.<sup>66</sup> During the protests of 2005, it was clearly noticeable that the direct contact of protestors with the army and the security forces was peaceful and amicable.<sup>67</sup> Many hugged the soldiers, gave them flowers and took pictures with them.<sup>68</sup>

Nevertheless, the reaction of the political regime also played a role in keeping the situation during the protests peaceful. With the assassination of Hariri in 2005 and precisely after Syria's withdrawal, President Lahoud and his political regime became isolated locally, regionally and internationally. Syria faced major restrictions that made it unable to force an end to the protests since France and the US were pressuring its regime to leave Lebanon.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, the cohesion of the Sunnis with the Future movement deterred Lahoud and Syria from moving against the protestors.<sup>70</sup> After the assassination of Hariri, the protestors in neighbourhoods with a predominately Sunni population used anti Syrian slogans accusing its regime of the assassination of Hariri and calling on it to withdraw its forces from Lebanon.<sup>71</sup>

During the protests of 2005 – and specifically on 28 February – the political regime lost its influence over the army and the security forces.<sup>72</sup> This occurred when the security forces and the Lebanese Army did not implement the orders of the government to stop the protestors from gathering in protest locations when the latter decided to bring down the government of Karame.<sup>73</sup> With the prospect of a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon resulting from the pressure exerted on its regime by the international community, the army's leadership regained its freedom and went back

to the policy of non-intervention that it had followed in the 1950s. The army's neutrality definitely played a role in calming the situation since any intervention might have put its soldiers in direct confrontation with the protestors, who were angry and determined to protest. Any violent action on the part of the political regime could have triggered a civil war. The army's command seems to have recognised that any violent intervention against the protestors would have surely angered the Sunnis, the Christian and the Druze officers and soldiers.<sup>74</sup> The history of the Lebanese Army revealed that in most cases when it had intervened in sectarian conflicts, its unity and cohesion were threatened. For example, during the civil war, in 1983, the Shi'a defected from the army when they were ordered to clash with the Shi'a militias in West Beirut.<sup>75</sup>

What keeps the protest peaceful is not only the behaviour of the protestors, but also the behaviour of the people targeted by the protestors plays an equal part here. Thus, any attempt to directly challenge the protestors from the part of the 8th of March factions could have escalated the situation into large-scale communal violence. In 2005, the reactions of the partisans of the 8th of March movement to the protestors from the 14th of March movement helped keep the situation calm. The partisans of the 8th of March movement stayed away from the locations of the protests. Although in a few cases, the partisans of 8th of March movement clashed with the partisans of the 14th of March movement in the 'mixed' areas of Beirut and Tripoli; these clashes were distant from the locations of the protests. As will be demonstrated in the coming sections, it was not in favour of the main factions with the 8th of March movement to allow the situation to escalate into large-scale communal, long-term violence with any faction of the 14th of March. For example, on 14 February 2007, the 14th of March movement organised a massive demonstration to commemorate Hariri's assassination. The demonstration took place a few metres away from where the 8th of March movement, and specifically where Hezbollah, had been protesting since late 2006. No violent clashes between the protestors were reported.<sup>76</sup> The leaderships of the 8th of March movement and the 14th of March movement worked collectively and logistically to separate the protestors, and the crowds responded to the calls of their leaders and stayed physically away from their opponents.<sup>77</sup>

The 14th of March movement led by the Future movement did not only rely on peaceful protests to challenge its opponents. The new constitutional reforms introduced by the Taif Accord mentioned earlier had made the 14th of March movement more interested in winning parliamentary elections to get what they wanted than challenging their opponents through violence. Thus, they mobilised all their efforts to win in the parliamentary elections of 2005 and 2009. Winning in the parliamentary elections was a priority for both the 14th of March and the 8th of March movements, respectively, to ensure their domination of the cabinet. In 2005 and 2009, respectively, the 14th of March movement managed to win a majority in the parliamentary elections. This allowed them to assign Fuad Saniyora, a close aide to Hariri and a member of the Future movement, to the seat of PM in 2005 and Saad Hariri in 2009.

Most factions within the 14th of March did not show any interest in trying to realign the balance of military might in their favour. Although in the 1950s and 1970s it was easier to acquire arms, it was still possible to acquire them in the post-2005 period. Hezbollah had managed to arm itself with the assistance of Syria and Iran. The clash of the Lebanese Army with the Fatah al Islam, the terrorist movement discussed above, in the Nahr al Bared camp in north Lebanon in 2007 revealed that Fatah al Islam had heavy and sophisticated armaments that were brought into Lebanon by sea and land.<sup>78</sup> Few factions within the Christians, the Sunni and the Druze continued to favour war as a mean to get what they wanted. Nevertheless, the changes – precisely the change in the balance of power within each community – did not give those factions the opportunity to allow the situation to escalate into a civil war.

One of the main groups within the 14th of March movement that witnessed a transformation in the use of violence was the Sunni faction. Without doubt, the 14th of March movement, and specifically, the Future movement could have armed itself had it had wanted to. They had the financial resources to buy weapons and the ability to acquire arms from different sources. While government sources and newspapers claimed that most groups were undertaking armed training, most factions denied the claim.<sup>79</sup> The events of 7 May 2008 demonstrated that the Future movement and its allies were not ready to challenge Hezbollah militarily. Although the partisans of the Future movement were armed, their weapons were not sufficient in terms of quality and quantity to challenge Hezbollah as the events of the 7 May 2008 revealed.<sup>80</sup> Only in a few cases did the Sunni factions and Hariri's partisans use small-scale violence against Hezbollah and its partisans when Hezbollah invaded their neighbourhoods.<sup>81</sup>

Since the 1990s, the Sunnis witnessed the rise of new powerful Sunni leaders who were moderate and ideologically less committed than their counterparts of 1950s and 1970s, like Rafik Hariri, Najib Mikati and Mohamad al Safadi. Most of those leaders were businessmen who had been investing in Lebanon since the end of the civil war. Thus, any violent protest on the part of their supporters would have surely led to the destruction of property they owned, especially since most of the protests took place in the Beirut, where most of them, and specifically Hariri, have been investing since 1990.

However, the most important factor that made the Sunnis less willing to protest violently was the ability of the Future movement to assume their leadership.<sup>82</sup> The Future movement is a moderate Sunni movement that was formed by Rafik Hariri in the 1990s and did not advocate the use of any violence as its counterparts had in 1958 and 1975.<sup>83</sup> Most Sunni factions or parties that had been advocating a progressive radical Arab Nationalist ideology since the 1950s had lost their influence and popularity.

The assassination of Hariri was not the only reason why the Sunnis stood behind the Future movement.<sup>84</sup> The tension between the Sunnis and the Shi'a, especially Hezbollah, had rallied even the most radical groups behind Hariri and his Future movement.<sup>85</sup> This movement had the financial resources, a strong influence over the

Sunni religious authorities and establishment, and strong and close foreign connections with many Arab and Western states to challenge Hezbollah.<sup>86</sup>

Still, the Sunni community witnessed in the last decade the rise of many Islamist movements and parties that advocated the use of violence.<sup>87</sup> Although many of them disapproved Hariri's political agenda, Hariri was able to politically tame the majority and brought them under his wing, either by providing them with financial assistance or political rewards.<sup>88</sup> The few Islamist movements, like Fatah al Islam, Jund al Sham and Maj Mouat al Diniya, who had, on many occasions, used violence against the Lebanese Army and the United National Interim Force for Lebanon (UNIFIL), did not have the capacity or popularity to lead the Sunnis into large-scale communal violence against the Shi'a.<sup>89</sup>

The change that took place in the Sunnis relationship with foreign countries was another development that showed that the Sunnis, particularly the Sunnis of the Future movement, became less inclined towards radicalism and the use of violence. The Sunni of Lebanon, who, on many occasions, had allied themselves with radical Arab regimes like the Egypt of Abid al Nasser, Libya and Syria and had relied in the past on the Palestinian armed groups stationed in Lebanon, since 2005 established ties with the so-called moderate Arab regimes, like Saudi Arabia and Moubarak's Egypt, and had moved under the leadership of Hariri and his son Saad closer to the US and France.<sup>90</sup>

Violence as a means of political advocacy and social change had characterised the history of the Christians, and especially, the Maronites. However, at the end of the civil war in 1990 most of them recognised that they were politically weak, demographically smaller and financially inferior.<sup>91</sup> The Kataib, one of the most influential Christian parties, had publicly rejected becoming involved again in any violent confrontation and advocated peaceful methods to pursue its political agenda.<sup>92</sup> Even when one of its young promising leaders, Pierre Gemayel, was assassinated in 2007, its partisans did not commit any violent act to avenge his death and remained calm and disciplined.<sup>93</sup> On the day of the assassination, Amin Gemayel, the father of Pierre and the leader of the Kataib, called on his partisans to stay calm and urged them not to commit any violence against the ones they accused of being behind the assassination.<sup>94</sup>

The Free Patriotic movement was another powerful Christian party that was inclined toward peaceful protest.<sup>95</sup> It had joined the 14th of March at the beginning of the cedar revolution and had actively participated in the early protests of the 14th of March, but by the end of 2005, it joined the 8th of March movement due to disagreements between its leader Michel Aoun and other members and parties of the 14th of March.

Not all factions within the Christians held the same view as to the balance of military might. The faction that was proven to show interest in arming itself was the Lebanese Forces. Although the Lebanese Forces claimed that it was working hard to become a peaceful movement, security reports noted that many of its members were caught training militarily in Mount Lebanon, the South and the North of Lebanon.<sup>96</sup> The recent release of documents by the Wikileaks website has revealed that Geagea

had requested assistance from the US ambassador to enable the Lebanese Forces to train 15,000 members and to provide him with heavy weapons to face Hezbollah.<sup>97</sup>

It remained, however, in the interests of the Lebanese forces not to defy the wishes of the 14th of March movement. The Lebanese forces might have realised that any disagreement with the 14th of March factions could have caused political setbacks, precisely the loss of political influence within the Lebanese state. The Lebanese forces' ability to win a few parliamentary seats in 2005 was made possible by its electoral alliance with the powerful Future movement, many Christian parties and leaders, and the Druze of Walid Jumblat.

The Druze, like the Maronites and Sunnis, underwent a major transformation in terms of the use of violence.<sup>98</sup> Not long ago and under the leadership of Kamal Jumblat, the Druze played a significant role in the civil wars of 1958 and 1975.<sup>99</sup> Since 2005, the Druze, led by Walid Jumblat, a powerful group within the 14th of March, showed great interest in articulating their political agenda and safeguarding their well-being by peaceful rather than violent methods, and they relied only on a strategy of alliances and political manoeuvres to safeguard the well-being of their community.<sup>100</sup> In 1990, in fact, Jumblat accepted the full disarmament of his militia. Nevertheless, the events of 8 May, as will be demonstrated, revealed that the Druze of the Mount Lebanon still possessed arms to defend themselves.

The Druze inclination towards the use of peaceful methods was not absolute. Although Jumblat favoured a peaceful resolution to the conflict, he called on the Druze to unite to defend their towns and villages from Hezbollah's invasion of the 7 May clashes.<sup>101</sup> However, Jumblat showed a desire to compromise when Hezbollah's fighters managed to isolate him in Beirut and were a few metres away from his residence.<sup>102</sup> Jumblat saw that his life was in danger and had no choice but to contact Hezbollah's main ally, the leader of the Amal party, to intervene and stop the attack on his residence. He then openly announced then that any long-term military confrontation with Hezbollah might have a destructive consequence on the Druze.<sup>103</sup>

#### THE PROTESTS OF THE 8TH OF MARCH MOVEMENT: 2006 AND 2008

As with the 14th of March movement, the 8th of March movement tried first to use peaceful measures (particularly constitutional methods) in order to get what it wanted from its opponents. The first attempt by the 8th of March movement to gain power was to try to win the parliamentary elections of 2005. However, the elections then did not give them a majority in the parliament, and thus the balance of power within the cabinet was not to be in their favour. In 2006, when the ministers of the 14th of March movement were heading towards ratifying the treaty with the United Nations to establish the Special Tribunal to investigate Hariri's assassination without taking into consideration the opposition of Hezbollah's ministers, Hezbollah, supported by the 8th of March movement, decided to bring down the government of Saniyora by constitutional measures. All Shi'a ministers resigned from the cabinet.<sup>104</sup> Hezbollah claimed that the Special Tribunal for Lebanon was to

be used by the US to destabilise the country and to charge Hezbollah, Syria and Iran with the murder.<sup>105</sup>

The withdrawal of the Shi'a ministers did not lead to the downfall of the government although it had lost its constitutional legitimacy to the 8th of March movement, represented by Hezbollah. Hezbollah and the 8th of March movement decided then to protest in order to pressure Saniyora to resign. Two massive demonstrations were organised on 1 December 2006 and on 10 December 2006. The objective behind these demonstrations was to show that the majority of the Lebanese wanted Saniyora to resign.<sup>106</sup> As in the case of the 14th of March movement, the 8th of March movement, represented by Hezbollah, the Free Patriotic movement and Amal, wanted to show that the majority of the Lebanese supported their cause, and thus, a peaceful protest was preferable. The three groups had the capacity and resources to organise large-scale peaceful protest activities. Buses were provided and media campaigns for peaceful protests were held.<sup>107</sup> On the location of the protest, they provided numerous marshals to make sure that protest remained peaceful.<sup>108</sup> However, as with the case of the 14th of March movement, it was the responsiveness and discipline of the protestors that kept the protest peaceful.<sup>109</sup>

The protestors held a sit-in for almost two years in the public squares surrounding the Grand Serail, the headquarters of Lebanon's prime minister. The sit-in took place in an extremely dangerous situation when tension and communal violence were taking place between the Shi'a and the Sunnis. Keeping the protest peaceful in this highly tense situation necessitated good organisational skills on the part of the organisers and discipline on the part of the protestors. Hezbollah, Amal and the Free Patriotic movement successfully provided all the logistics needed.<sup>110</sup> As was the case with the 14th of March sit-in, the protestors were entertained by the organisers.<sup>111</sup>

Saniyora was unwilling to respond to the demands of the protestors, although he could not rely on the government to deter the protest. The Taif Accord did not introduce any mechanism to strengthen the capacity of the government to deal with either violent or peaceful protests that might escalate into civil wars. The Taif Accord mainly reshuffled the distribution of political powers within the executive branch and kept sectarianism and consociationalism in place.<sup>112</sup> Still, Saniyora had the support of the majority of the Sunnis, the 14th of March movement, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the US and France, which allowed him to defy the protestors.<sup>113</sup>

Hezbollah and its allies within the 8th of March movement decided then to force Saniyora's hand in early 2007.<sup>114</sup> Partisans from all factions affiliated with the 8th of March movement blocked roads, burned tires and attacked all individuals who had decided not to stay at home and report to work.<sup>115</sup> Tires were provided for the protestors to burn and protestors were provided with transportation to protest locations.<sup>116</sup> It is interesting to note that the protestors took the sectarian composition of the areas where they protested into consideration. Christian protestors protested in Christian areas and Muslim protestors in Muslim areas.<sup>117</sup> This must have surely helped to defuse the sectarian tension and kept the possibility of the outbreak of violence between the Muslims and the Christians very low.

The Future movement and the Lebanese Forces decided to challenge the protestors by organising counter-protests to force them to stop.<sup>118</sup> The Lebanese Forces challenged their Christians counterparts and the Future movement their Muslim counterparts.<sup>119</sup> It seems that the possibility of an outbreak of large-scale intra- and inter-communal violence pushed Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic movement to end their protest by inviting the army to intervene. The situation was very dangerous and could have easily escalated into large-scale communal violence, something Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic movement did not want.

In May 2008, the Lebanese conflict reached a critical stage when the Lebanese government took a decision to dismantle the telecommunication network of Hezbollah and to reshuffle the security officers stationed at the Lebanese airport by removing the security officials who were politically close to the Amal Party. Hezbollah strongly denounced the decisions. Hassan Nassrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, in a press conference gave his partisans the green light to defend the party and its weapons.<sup>120</sup> In a few hours, Hezbollah's partisans blocked most of the roads leading to the capital and to Beirut International airport.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, Hezbollah went on a military offensive against the Future movement in the Sunni neighbourhoods of West Beirut and against the Druze partisans of Jumblat in the Druze towns and villages of Mount Lebanon.

A few days after the outbreak of the crisis, all contending factions responded to the Prince of Qatar's invitation and met in Doha. The protest had left more than 100 dead and more than 200 injured.<sup>122</sup> It seemed at the time that there was a consensus among foreign powers to keep the situation in Lebanon under control and not allow it to escalate into a civil war. Although Saudi Arabia and Egypt were not happy to see Qatar become a major broker in Lebanon, and although the US and France were not happy to see Hezbollah retaining its influence and its demands fulfilled in Doha, they all endorsed the agreement since without it, their Lebanese allies might have faced a military defeat by Hezbollah's fighters.<sup>123</sup> The negotiations in Doha on 21 May led to the Doha agreement that brought an end to the 8th of March movement's protest and sketched a road map to resolve the crisis.<sup>124</sup>

Although the balance of military might was in favour of Hezbollah, the balance of power was not. The case of Hezbollah revealed that one should clearly differentiate between the balance of power and the balance of military might in Lebanon. Although Hezbollah managed to get what it wanted in Doha and to pressure the government to cancel the decisions that had caused the crisis, it was in its best interest to see a quick end to the crisis. Its image had suffered greatly, and the consensus in Lebanon on its role as a resistance movement no longer existed.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, although Hezbollah had the capacity to initially occupy Beirut, it did not have the ability to keep its presence there safe and unchallenged for a significant length of time. Without doubt, if the crisis was unresolved, it was probable that not only Hariri's supporters, but also most Lebanese Sunnis, including Islamists groups, would have moved against Hezbollah. The Sunni political and religious establishment stood behind Saniyora and occasionally visited the Grand Serial during the crisis to express their support for Saniyora.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, the

confrontation in Mount Lebanon with the Druze revealed that Hezbollah's military advantage had its limits. The unity of the Druze and their familiarity with the terrain allowed them to challenge Hezbollah's fighters with strength.

The possibility of an outbreak of violence with the Christians if Hezbollah's offensive had continued was high. Surely, this was not in Hezbollah's interest since such violence would have embarrassed Aoun and his partisans. Already, Aoun had lost some of his popularity among the Christians, since 2008, because of his alliance with Hezbollah. In the parliamentary elections of 2009, his lists received fewer votes than in the elections of 2005. Furthermore, the Maronite Church was headed by Patriarch Mar Nassrallah Boutros Sfeir, known for his opposition to Hezbollah and repeatedly critical of Aoun and his alliance with Hezbollah. The patriarch had called on the Christians to support the 14th of March movement's political agenda.<sup>127</sup>

On the other hand, any large-scale communal violence between Hezbollah and the 14th of March movement would have surely weakened its position vis-à-vis Israel. Hezbollah's officials had always referred to this in their statements and had acknowledged the fact that any involvement in long-term internal sectarian confrontations might be to Israel's advantage.<sup>128</sup>

Hezbollah's position to avoid clashes and to keep away from the Lebanese Army allowed the situation to remain peaceful during the protest of 2006 and not to escalate into large-scale long-term violence in 2008. Even when the army killed a few protestors from Hezbollah in January 2008, the leadership of Hezbollah worked hard to keep the situation calm.<sup>129</sup> As in 2006, the Lebanese Army and the security forces in 2008 did not intervene to end Hezbollah's military offensive.<sup>130</sup> The 7 May confrontations occurred after the Nahr al Bared confrontation. At that time, the army suffered from fatigue and was still struggling to reorganise. Drained by the loss of lives and ammunition, the army appeared ill equipped and poorly trained. Although its popularity was boosted after its victory in the battle of Bared, the army suffered the loss of many of its commanders who were assassinated during the few months that followed that battle.<sup>131</sup>

The 14th of March movement played a role in keeping the protest of the 8th of March movement peaceful. The reaction of the 14th of March partisans to the protests of the 8th of March movement played a role in preventing the situation from escalating into large-scale communal violence in 2006 and 2008, respectively. On the eve of the protest of 2006, the 14th of March leadership held a meeting on 2 December and announced that it would not use violence to end the protest around the Serail and it would continue its peaceful struggle to defend Saniyora and his government.<sup>132</sup> In May 2008, after Hezbollah held its offensive, the Future movement held a meeting on 10 May and declared that it would not react violently but would continue its struggle peacefully.<sup>133</sup> It claimed that it would only use violence to defend itself.<sup>134</sup> The Lebanese Forces, the Kataib and the Free Patriotic movement worked hard to make sure that their partisans did not clash with each other or with Hezbollah's partisans.<sup>135</sup>

## THE FUTURE MOVEMENT PROTEST OF 2011

From 2008 to 2011, the intensity of communal violence dropped and no assassinations took place. All factions seemed committed to the Doha agreement. A new government in which all groups were represented was formed. Hariri improved his relationship with Hezbollah and Syria, respectively.<sup>136</sup> The International Tribunal for Hariri's assassination under the supervision of the UN Security Council was founded and started its work. Its mandate was expanded to look into all assassinations that had occurred in Lebanon since 2005. The United National International Force for Lebanon (UNIFIL) was expanded in terms of personnel, military equipment and responsibilities after the July 2006 war with Israel.<sup>137</sup> Although Hezbollah kept on improving its military capabilities, it could not disregard the presence of an expanded, powerful UNIFIL presence in the South of Lebanon – Hezbollah's stronghold – which was regularly reporting on the transfer of weapons to Lebanon to the Security Council.<sup>138</sup> On the regional level, a rapprochement between Syria and Saudi Arabia started to take place that encouraged a peaceful resolution to the Lebanese crisis.<sup>139</sup>

Nevertheless, a dangerous political deadlock that might have led the country into large-scale communal violence took place on 13 January 2011. Hezbollah and its allies asked the Lebanese government to reconsider its position on the International Tribunal for Hariri. Hezbollah claimed that the Tribunal aimed to indict a few of its members based on the confessions of false witnesses, as reported by the *Der Spiegel* German magazine.<sup>140</sup> Hariri refused to place this request on the government's agenda before the first report of the Tribunal was made public.<sup>141</sup> Hezbollah, supported by all factions within the 8th of March movement, then had no other choice but to bring down the government. They had the opportunity to do it by constitutional measures. Once again the constitutional changes introduced by the Taif Accord allowed the contending factions to use peaceful measures, although in this case Hezbollah was really threatened and might have used violence rather than peaceful measures to block any decision related to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. Two-thirds of all ministers, affiliated with Hezbollah and its allies, resigned.<sup>142</sup>

Hariri faced another setback when he did not receive a majority of the nominations of the MPs to form the new government.<sup>143</sup> Prior to the crisis, the MPs affiliated with the 14th of March movement were the majority, and Hariri's return to the seat of PM was almost assured. The change in the position of a number of MPs, mainly Walid Jumblat and his parliamentary block, towards Hariri granted the 8th of March's candidate Najib Mikati the majority of the votes to form the new government.

The Sunni community was shocked and devastated by Hariri's downfall.<sup>144</sup> The Sunni Mufti, the highest Sunni religious authority, supported Hariri and announced that the Shi'a were working to take over the Lebanese state by the use of force and refused to accept a Sunni other than Hariri forming the new government.<sup>145</sup> They expressed their anger on the way the opposition planned the downfall when Hariri was meeting with the US president. Hariri's partisans took to the streets and

protested violently in cities with predominately Sunni populations. They destroyed public and private properties, attacked the Lebanese Army, attacked offices of many of the MPs who voted against Hariri, and blocked roads for almost two days.<sup>146</sup> It was not in the interest of Hariri to go to war since not only were military resources not in the Future movement's favour, but neither was the balance of power time. Most of his allies within the 14th of March movement had not joined the protestors.<sup>147</sup> Few powerful Sunni leaders did not support the protestors, like Najib Mikati and Mohamad al Safadi, and condemned the protests. Furthermore, the 8th of March partisans stayed away from the protestors and this diffused the tension.<sup>148</sup> The protest ended when Hariri called on the supporters to end their protest and to refrain from using violence.<sup>149</sup> Hariri had no other choice but to call on the protestors to stop.

#### CONCLUSION

Although, a few of the reforms introduced by the Taif Accord of 1990 had encouraged the Lebanese of the post-2005 period to resolve their differences peacefully by using constitutional methods, the outbreak of a civil war remained an entirely possible outcome. Nevertheless, and although, the situation in Lebanon was very tense when the protests of the post-2005 period were taking place, the situation did not escalate into civil war. This can clearly be linked to the fact that the changed political circumstances – had meant that the outbreak of a civil conflict was no longer the best method for them to secure their strategic interests.

The political circumstances that had led to outbreaks of political violence in 1958 and in 1975 did not exist in post 2005. In post-2005 Lebanon, the balance of power and the balance of military might made most Lebanese parties feel they could not win or achieve what they wanted if the situation escalated into a civil war. Their ability to differentiate between the balance of power and the balance of military might and the subsequent limits they imposed on their actions spared Lebanon of another outbreak of civil war. Furthermore, the ability of the Lebanese Army to recognise the consequences of their involvement in any dispute among the Lebanese and a similar conclusion drawn by foreign actors had assisted in keeping the situation from escalating into large-scale communal violence.

Thus, the worrying thing about Lebanon's stability and peaceful coexistence is that Lebanon still lacks a structural or institutional mechanism that will allow the Lebanese to resolve their disputes peacefully. The outbreak of a civil war in Lebanon continues to depend as was the case in 1958 and 1975 on the personal and rational calculations of Lebanese leaders and their positions in relation to the prevailing balance of power and military might. As long as the contending factions in Lebanon remain unwilling to change the balance of power and military might or continue not to have the capacity to do so, as long as the Lebanese Army continue to stay on an equal footing in relation to all contending factions and as long as regional and international actors or regional changes do not encourage them to go to war

against each other only then will Lebanon continue to be immune from the outbreak of civil wars.

## NOTES

1. The 14th of March movement was a coalition of the Christian, the Muslim and the Druze parties, factions and individuals that was formed in 2005 as a direct reaction to the assassination of Rafik Hariri. It was composed of the following political parties: the Future movement (Sunni), the Progressive Socialist Party (Druze), the Lebanese forces (Christian) and the Kataib Party (Christian). The 8th of March movement was a coalition of mainly the Shi'a and the Christian factions like Hezbollah (Shi'a), the Amal movement (Shi'a) and the Free Patriotic movement (Christian).
2. This study considers as civil war a military confrontation in which more than 1,000 casualties are reported and the confrontations last for more than a few days.
3. The author collected the needed information from newspapers, the media and the reports of the security forces and civil defense. This article reviewed the archives of three Lebanese newspapers: *An Nahar*, the *Daily Star* and *Now Lebanon*. The author also collected information by the technique of direct non-participant observation. The author attended most of the protests that have taken place in Lebanon since 2005.
4. This article differentiates between the balance of power and the balance military might. Although military might can play a role in determining the balance of power, other elements do play a similar role. The balance of power is determined by economic and financial resources, the size of political representation in the government and parliament, communal cohesion and foreign contacts. A faction could have military might in its favour without having the balance of power to its favour.
5. The Taif Accord was the agreement that was negotiated by the Lebanese members of parliament in 1990 in the city of Taif in Saudi Arabia to end Lebanon's civil war that started in 1975. Prior to the Taif all executive powers were vested in the president who was assisted by a cabinet headed by prime minister. The president had the power to nominate the prime minister and the cabinet members without referring to the parliament. The Taif Accord had moved political power from the hands of the Maronite Lebanese president and put it in the hands of the Lebanese cabinet headed by a Sunni Prime Minister and where all Lebanese sects were represented. This had allowed more participation from the part of all Lebanese sects and had increased their influence over the executive branch. This change had opened a greater opportunity for the Lebanese to use constitutional measures to influence the decision of the government rather than protesting violently on a large scale as they did in the 1958 and 1975. Furthermore, the Taif had changed the way the prime minister, the chief executive, was nominated. The president became obliged to nominate the person who received the majority of the votes of the MPs. Accordingly, winning parliamentary elections became a priority for most political groups if their domination over the political system was to be assured.
6. See Are Knudsen, 'Acquiescence to Assassination in Post-civil War Lebanon?' *Mediterranean Politics* 15/1 (2010) pp.1–23.
7. See Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon: A History of Internationalization of Communal Violence* (New York: Columbia Press 2002), Michael Johnson, *All Honorable Men: The Social Origins of War* (London: I. B. Taurus 2001), Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, translated from German by John Richardson (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies and I.B. Tauris 1993).
8. See here Samih Farsoun, 'Student Protest and Coming Crisis in Lebanon', *MERIP Report* 19 (August 1973) pp.3–14, and Halim Barakat, *Lebanon in Strife: Student Preludes to Civil War* (London: University Texas Press 1977).
9. The National Pact of 1943 called on the Christians not to ally themselves with any western power and the Muslims not seek unity with any Arab state. Farid El Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities: The Making and Politics of the 1943 National Pact*, Occasional Papers on Lebanon 12 (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies 1991).
10. Caroline Atieh, *Struggle in the Levant: Lebanon in the 1950s* (London: I.B. Taurus 2004).
11. Erika Alin, *The United States and the 1958 Crisis: American Intervention in the Middle East* (Lanham: University Press of America 1994).
12. *Ibid.*

13. 'Manifesto', *An Nahar* 13 Apr. 1958.
14. Kamal Salibi, *Cross Roads to Civil War* (New York: Caravan Books 1976) p. 93.
15. See Attieh, *Struggle in the Levant Nasser Kalawoun, The Struggle for Lebanon: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris 2000).
16. Alin (note 11).
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Salibi (note 14); Farid El Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967–1976* (London: I.B. Tauris 2000).
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. For a sample of the protest, see *An Nahar* 7 Jun. 2007, and *An Nahar* 28 Apr. 2007.
25. See *An Nahar* published on the following dates for a full account of these explosions: *An Nahar* 19 Mar. 2005, *An Nahar* 24 Mar. 2005, *An Nahar* 2 Apr. 2005 and *An Nahar* 23 Aug. 2005.
26. Ibid.
27. See a few samples of violent shootouts: *An Nahar* 9 May 2008, *An Nahar* 8 Oct. 2009, *An Nahar* 25 Aug. 2010.
28. On 11 June 2007, the United Nations Security Council issued a statement showing concern for the illegal arms movements into Lebanon: Security Council Presidential Statement: SC9040: <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sc9040.doc.htm>>. In a report on published by *Gun Policy Lebanon* is on the top lists of number of personal guns possessed by civilians: 'Lebanon – Gun Facts, Figures and the Law', online at <[www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/lebanon](http://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/lebanon)>
29. *IMonthly*, 'Opinion Poll: The Lebanese Follow their Leaders' Feb.–Mar. 2007, online at <[www.imonthly.com](http://www.imonthly.com)>
30. See Samir el Khaden, *The War of Surprises and Deceptions: July 2006* (Beirut: The Arab Institute and West Studies 2007).
31. Human Rights Watch, 'Report: Civilian Killed in 2006 Lebanon War' (28 August 2006), online at <[www.hrw.org/en/news/2007/08/28/lebanonisrael-hezbollah-rockets-targeted-civilians-2006-war](http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2007/08/28/lebanonisrael-hezbollah-rockets-targeted-civilians-2006-war)>
32. Hassan Nassarallah press conference on 27 May 2007 as published in *An Nahar* 28 May 2007.
33. Are Knudsen, 'Precarious Peace Building: Post–War Lebanon, 1990–2005', CMI Paper, CMI Michelsen Institute, 2005, online at <[www.cmi.no/..publication/?2038=precarious-peace-building..lebanon](http://www.cmi.no/..publication/?2038=precarious-peace-building..lebanon)> UNDP, 'Lebanon's Parliament's Role in a Struggle for Legality, National Reconciliation, Reform and Liberation', Apr. 2006, online at <[www.arabparliaments.org/publications/legislature/2005/..lebanon-e.pdf](http://www.arabparliaments.org/publications/legislature/2005/..lebanon-e.pdf)>
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid. Lebanon had granted in 1990 amnesty for most crimes committed during the civil war. No militia leader other than Samir Gagega was put on trial. Gagega was tried for the crimes he was accused of committing after the end of the civil war.
36. Mona Yacoubian and Scott Lasensky, *Dealing with Damascus Seeking a Greater Return on U.S.-Syria Relations* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press 2008). Casey L. Addis and Christopher M. Blanchard, 'Hezbollah: Background and Issues for the Congress', CRS Report for Congress (3 Jan. 2011), online at <[www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R41446.pdf](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R41446.pdf)>, ICG, 'Engaging Syria: US Constrains and Opportunities', Middle East Report 83 (11 Feb. 2009), online at <[www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/syria/083-engaging-syria-us-constraints-and-opportunities.aspx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/syria/083-engaging-syria-us-constraints-and-opportunities.aspx)>
37. See Jeffrey Feltman (US Ambassador to Lebanon) Interview by *Now Lebanon* 6 Jul. 2007, online at <[www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=5993](http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=5993)> and Condoleezza Rice, Press Conference published *Naharnet* 27 Jan. 2007, online at <<http://old.naharnet.com/dominio/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/Lebanon/AFC88FE95FBB5D34C225726F0030D95A?>>, and see Security Council, 'Resolution 1559', online at <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/498/92/PDF/N0449892.pdf?OpenElement>> and 'Resolution 1701', online at <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/465/03/PDF/N0646503.pdf?OpenElement>>, see also Brent J. Talbot and Heidi Harriman, 'Disarming Hezbollah', *Mediterranean Quarterly* 19/4 (Fall 2008) pp.29–53.
38. See Frederic Wehrey, Theodore W. Karasik, Alireza Nader, Jeremy Ghez, Lydia Hnasel and Robert A. Gufey, *Saudi Iranian Relations since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry Rely, Cooperation, and*

- Implications for U.S. Policy* (Pittsburgh: RAND 2009), online at <[www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND\\_MG840.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG840.pdf)>, and Elliot Abrams, 'Egypt, Lebanon, and America Policy in the Middle East', Council on Foreign Relations (9 Feb. 2011), online at <<http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/112/abr020911.pdf>>.
39. Ibid.
  40. Ibid.
  41. On the Cedar Revolution, see Chibli Malat, *March 2221: Lebanon's Cedar Revolution: An Essay on Non-violence and Justice* (Beirut: LIR 2007).
  42. See announcement of 14th of March when they launched their 'Cedar Revolution' on 20 February 2005, from the Bristol Hotel in Beirut as published in *An Nahar* 21 Feb. 2005.
  43. Official Statement of the 14th of March movement, announced on 14 March 2005, and published in *An Nahar* 15 Mar. 2005.
  44. Ibid.
  45. 14th of March movement, Official Statement on 12 February 2007, as published in *An Nahar* 13 Feb. 2007, and 14th of March statement on 16 February 2011, online at <[www.14march.org/news-details.php?nid=Mjc3MzIy](http://www.14march.org/news-details.php?nid=Mjc3MzIy)> and 14th of March official statement on 16 October 2009, online at: <[www.14march.org/news-details.php?nid=MTYzNDk2](http://www.14march.org/news-details.php?nid=MTYzNDk2)>
  46. ICG, 'Hezbollah and the Lebanese Crisis', *Middle East Report* 69 (10 Oct. 2007), online at <[www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/lebanon/069-hizbollah-and-the-lebanese-crisis.aspx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/lebanon/069-hizbollah-and-the-lebanese-crisis.aspx)>, Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2007).
  47. Mar Nassrallah Boutros Sfeir, Press Conference as published in *An Nahar* 8 Jun. 2009.
  48. For more information on the two strikes that paralyzed the country, see *An Nahar* 25 Feb. 2005, *An Nahar* 24 May 2005.
  49. Author direct observation 27 Feb. 2005, 24 Mar. 2005, and 2 Apr. 2005.
  50. Ibid.
  51. Ibid.
  52. See Nicolos Blandford, *Killing Mr. Lebanon: The Assassination of Rafik Hariri and its Impact on the Middle East* (London: I.B. Taurus 2006), ICG, 'Lebanon's Politics: The Sunni Community and Hariri's Future Current', *Middle East Report*, 96 (26 May 2010), online at <[www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/lebanon/096-lebanons-politics-the-sunni-community-and-hariris-future-current.aspx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/lebanon/096-lebanons-politics-the-sunni-community-and-hariris-future-current.aspx)>.
  53. All the reports of the security forces and civil defence did not report any violent acts during these funerals.
  54. Hanf (note 7).
  55. Author Direct Observation 28 Feb. 2005 and 14 Mar. 2005.
  56. Ibid.
  57. Ibid.
  58. No casualties were reported by the Lebanese Red Cross or the Lebanese National Defense. See speeches of Said Hariri, Amin Gemayel, Walid Jumblat, Jibrán Tuéni during the 14th of March 2005, demonstration and as published in *An Nahar* 15 Mar. 2005.
  59. Ibid.
  60. Ibid.
  61. Ibid.
  62. Ibid.
  63. Ibid.
  64. Author Direct Observation, 15 Feb. 2005.
  65. Ibid.
  66. Ibid.
  67. Author Direct Observation, 27 Feb. 2005, 24 Mar. 2005 and 2 Apr. 2005.
  68. Ibid.
  69. ICG, 'Engaging Syria: US Constrains and Opportunities', *Middle East Report*, 83 (11 Feb. 2009), online at <[www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/syria/083-engaging-syria-us-constraints-and-opportunities.aspx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/syria/083-engaging-syria-us-constraints-and-opportunities.aspx)>.
  70. Ibid.
  71. Author direct observation, 14 Feb. 2005.
  72. Between 1990 and 2005, the Lebanese Army was a tool in the hands of the political regime to crack down on the Lebanese opposition. See Aram Nerguizian, 'The Lebanese Armed Forces: Challenges

- and Opportunities in Post Syria Lebanon', *CSIS* (10 Feb. 2009), online at <[www.csis.org/publication/lebanese-armed-forces](http://www.csis.org/publication/lebanese-armed-forces)>.
73. Lebanese Army Statement on 27 February 2005 as published in *An Nahar* 28 Feb. 2005. Michel Sleinam, Commander in Chief of the Lebanese Army, Statement on 25 Feb. 2005 published in *An Nahar* 26 Feb. 2005.
  74. All sects were represented in the Lebanese army according to quotas. On this subject, see Florence Gaub, 'Rebuilding Armed Forces: Learning from the Iraq and Lebanon', *SSI* (May 2011), online at <[www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB1068.pdf](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB1068.pdf)>.
  75. On the Lebanese Army, see Joseph Kechechian, 'The Lebanese Army, Capabilities and Challenges', *Conflict Quarterly* 5/1 (1985) pp.15–39, Barak Oren, *The Lebanese Army: A National Institution in a Divided Society* (New York: Suny Press 2009). Florence Gaub, 'Multi Ethnic Armies in the Aftermath of Civil War: Lessons Learned from Lebanon', *Defense Studies* 7/1 (March 2007) pp.5–20.
  76. Author Direct Observation and the reports of the civil defence and security forces as published in *An Nahar* 15 Mar. 2007.
  77. Author Direct Observation, 14 Feb. 2007.
  78. See Time Gade, 'Fatah al-Islam: Between Global and Local Jihad', Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (5 Dec. 2007), online at <[www.rapporter.ffi.no/rapporter/2007/02727.pdf](http://www.rapporter.ffi.no/rapporter/2007/02727.pdf)> and Simon Haddad, 'Fateh al Islam in Lebanon: Anatomy of a Terrorist Organization', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 33/6 (2010) pp.548–69.
  79. *Daily Star* 26 Sept. 2006.
  80. See Borzou Daraghi and Raed Rafei, 'Private Force no Match for Hezbollah', *The Times* 12 May 2008, online at <[www.articles.latimes.com/2008/may/12/world/fg-security12](http://www.articles.latimes.com/2008/may/12/world/fg-security12)>.
  81. See examples of clashes in Mazzraa: *An Nahar* 21 Feb. 2007.
  82. In the parliament of 2005 and 2009, the Future movement had the largest unchallenged Sunni presence.
  83. ICG, 'Lebanon's Politics: The Sunni Community'.
  84. *Ibid.*
  85. *Ibid.*
  86. *Ibid.*
  87. See Omayma Abdel-Latif, 'Lebanon's Sunni Islamist: A Growing Forces', Carnegie Paper, Carnegie Centre, no. 6 (Jan. 2008), online at <[http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CMEC6\\_abdellatif\\_lebanon\\_final.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CMEC6_abdellatif_lebanon_final.pdf)>
  88. *Ibid.*
  89. *Ibid.*
  90. The Sunnis in the 1950s and 1970s showed great opposition to the French and the US influence in Lebanon.
  91. The Taif Accord took away most of the political powers of the Christians. See Iliya Harik, 'The Maronite Church and Political Change in Lebanon' in Leonard Binder (ed.) *Politics in Lebanon* (New York: J. Wiley and Sons 1966) pp.31–56; Marie-Christine Aulas, 'The Socio-Ideological Development of the Maronite Community: The Emergence of the Phalanges and the Lebanese Forces', *Arab Studies Quarterly* 7/4 (Fall 1985) pp.1–27. For the post-2005, see ICG, 'The New Lebanese Equation: The Christians' Central Role', *Middle East Report* 78 (15 Jul. 2008), online at <[www.crisisgroup.org/~/Iraq%20Syria%20Lebanon/Lebanon/e\\_new\\_lebanese\\_equation\\_the\\_christians\\_central\\_role\\_english\\_web.ashx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/Iraq%20Syria%20Lebanon/Lebanon/e_new_lebanese_equation_the_christians_central_role_english_web.ashx)>.
  92. Announcement by Amin Gemayel and Pierre Gemayel on Violence.
  93. Records of the security forces and civil defence on 21 Nov. 2007.
  94. Amin Gemayel, statement the night his son Pierre was assassinated, see *An Nahar* 22 Nov. 2006.
  95. It had managed to have the largest Christian representation in the parliaments of 2005 and 2009 and also had the second largest parliamentary block in these two parliaments, respectively. See FPM statement on 13 March 2005 as published in *An Nahar* 14 Mar. 2005 and *An Nahar* 1 Dec. 2006.
  96. See Nicolas Blanford, 'Lebanon's Arm Race', *Now Lebanon* (8 Nov. 2007), online at <[www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=18908](http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=18908)>.
  97. Wikileaks cable dated 9 May 2008 published in *Al Akhbar* newspaper (11 Mar. 2011).
  98. Leila Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies and I.B. Tauris 1984), Judith Harik, 'The Effect of the Military Tradition on the Lebanon's Assertive Druze', *International Sociology* 10 (March 1995) pp.51–71.

99. See article Farid el Khazen, 'Kamal Jumblatt, the Uncrowned Druze Prince of the Left', *Middle Eastern Studies* 24/2 (1988) pp.178–205.
100. See Marwan Rowayheb, 'Walid Jumblat and Political Alliances: The Politics of Adaptation', *Middle East Critique* 20/1 (Spring 2011) pp.47–66.
101. Rowayheb, 'Walid Jumblat'.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid.
104. Ministers of the same sect had the power to bring down the government if they collectively resigned since Lebanon's constitution made it compulsory for any government to be constitutional to have all Lebanese sects represented in it although in different proportions. Furthermore, the practice to bring down the government remained possible by the resignation of 2/3 of its members regardless of their sectarian affiliation.
105. Naim Kassem Speech, Beirut, on 12 November 2006, as published in *An Nahar* 13 Nov. 2006, The Shia Highest Council, Official Statement, on 13 November 2006, as published in *An Nahar* 14 Mar. 2006, Hassan Nasrallah, Press Conference, Beirut, on 19 November, 2006, as published in *An Nahar* 20 Nov. 2006.
106. Michel Aoun Interview, *Reuters* (1 Dec. 2006), online at <[www.reuters.com/. . ./2006/. . ./us-lebanon-aoun-idUSL0190031420061201](http://www.reuters.com/. . ./2006/. . ./us-lebanon-aoun-idUSL0190031420061201)>.
107. Author's Direct Observation, 1 Dec. 2006.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Author's Direct Observation, 22 Dec. 2006, 4 Mar. 2007 and 2 Jun. 2007.
111. Ibid.
112. It stripped the president of his executive political powers and left him with a few limited ones. Instead, it vested the most important political powers in a cabinet led by a Sunni prime minister.
113. See *An Nahar* 8 Dec. 2006.
114. Michel Aoun Press Conference, Beirut, on 22 January as published in *An Nahar* 23 Jan. 2006.
115. Author's Direct Observation, 23 Jan. 2007.
116. Ibid and *An Nahar* 24 Jan. 2007.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid.
120. Hassan Nasrallah, Press Conference on 8 May 2008, as published in *An Nahar* 9 May 2008. Hezbollah official statement on 7 May 2008, as published in *An Nahar* 7 May 2008.
121. See ICG, 'Hizbollah's Weapons Turn Inward', *Middle East Briefing* 23 (15 May 2007), online at <[www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/lebanon/b023-lebanon-hizbollahs-weapons-turn-inward.aspx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/lebanon/b023-lebanon-hizbollahs-weapons-turn-inward.aspx)>.
122. Records of civil defence on 15 May 2008.
123. See Uzi Rabi, 'Qatar's Relations with Israel: Challenging Arab and Gulf Norms', *The Middle East Journal* 63/3 (Summer 2009) pp.443–59.
124. 'Doha Dialogue Talks – 5th Day of Talks May 21 2008 – Lebanese Leaders Reach an Agreement', *CR News* (21 May 2008), online at <[www.cedarsrevolution.net/jtphp/index.php?option=com](http://www.cedarsrevolution.net/jtphp/index.php?option=com)>.
125. Hezbollah, since it was established and until the May 2008 crisis, had restrained itself from getting involved internally or getting into direct confrontation with other Lebanese players, with a few exceptions in the 1990s when it clashed with Haraket Amal. Hezbollah then was only concerned with resisting Israel's occupation of Lebanon. Hezbollah's popularity was boosted in 2000 when Israel withdrew its army from Lebanon. The consensus around Hezbollah's achievement allowed it to keep its arms since it was believed then that they would only be used to defend Lebanon against Israel.
126. See *An Nahar* 9 Dec. 2006 and *An Nahar* 8 May 2008.
127. Mar Nasrallah Boutros, Press Conference on 7 June 2008 as published in *An Nahar* 8 Jun. 2008.
128. Hezbollah official statement on 7 May 2008, as published in *An Nahar* 7 May 2008.
129. See *Daily Star* 28 Jan. 2008.
130. The Lebanese Army, Statement on 30 Nov. 2006, as published in *An Nahar* 31 Nov. 2006, the Lebanese Army, and Communiqué on 10 May 2008 as published in *An Nahar* 11 May 2008.
131. On 14 December 2007, Brigadier Francois el Hajj, who masterminded the Naher al Bared victory, was assassinated.

132. The 14th of March movement manifesto of 1 December 2006, as published in *The Daily Star* (2 Dec. 2006).
133. 14th of March Official Communiqué on 10 May 2008, as published in *An Nahar* 11 May 2008.
134. *Ibid.*
135. *An Nahar* mentioned that an understanding took place between all Christian factions to keep their neighborhoods peaceful. See *An Nahar* 8 May 2008.
136. ICG, 'Trial by Fire: The Politics of the Special Tribunal For Lebanon', *Middle East Report* 100 (2 Dec. 2010), online at <[www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/lebanon/100-trial-by-fire-the-politics-of-the-special-tribunal-for-lebanon.aspx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/lebanon/100-trial-by-fire-the-politics-of-the-special-tribunal-for-lebanon.aspx)>.
137. On the new UNIFIL, see Karim Makdissi and Timur Goskel, Hans Bastian Hauck and Stuart Reigeluth, 'UNFIL II: Emerging and Evolving European Engagement in Lebanon', *EuorMesco* (Jan. 2009), online at <[www.euromesco.net/images/paper76eng.pdf](http://www.euromesco.net/images/paper76eng.pdf)>.
138. ICG, (note 136).
139. *Ibid.*
140. Matt Nash, 'The Government Collapses', *Now Lebanon* (12 Jan. 2011), online at <[www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=229611](http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=229611)>.
141. *Ibid.*
142. *Ibid.*
143. See *Daily Star* (26 Jan. 2011).
144. See Nicholas Blandford, 'Sunnis Launch Day of Rage to Protest Hezbollah's Soft Coup in Lebanon', *Christian Science Monitor* (25 Jan. 2011), online at <[www.csmonitor.com/.../Sunnis-launch-Day-of-Rage-to-protest-Hezbollah-s-soft-coup-in-Lebanon](http://www.csmonitor.com/.../Sunnis-launch-Day-of-Rage-to-protest-Hezbollah-s-soft-coup-in-Lebanon)>.
145. Muhamad Kabani, Press Statement, *An Nahar* 14 Jan. 2011.
146. *An Nahar* 14 Jan. 2011. Author Direct Observation, 12 Jan. 2011.
147. Author's Direct Observation, 26 Jan. 2011, and *Daily Star* 26 Jan. 2011.
148. *Ibid.*
149. Saad Hariri, Statement on the *Future TV* 25 Jan. 2011.