

Lebanon Known as Terror torn Country - A Stage for Regional and International Power plays

Mr.Nimesh Patel,

Asst.Prof (Ahmedabad Institute of Technology) & Research Scholar, Pacific Academy of Higher Education & Research University

Mr. Devendra Lodha,

Asst.Prof. (Ahmedabad Institute of Technology) & Research Scholar, B.K.School of Business Management, Gujarat University

Ms.Hetal Jani,

Asst.Prof. (Ahmedabad Institute of Technology) & Research Scholar, Kadi Sarva Vishwavidyalaya

"When God created Lebanon he said to the angels nearby that it will be a land of terrific natural beauty with tall majestic mountains full of snow, beautifully sparkling rivers cutting through forests filled with many types of trees and high cliffs over-looking sandy beaches and waters with an abundance of sea life. I shall make the land rich and make the people prosper!"

One angel intervened and said, "Lord, isn't that unfair to the rest of the world?"

"Actually no" God replied, "Just wait and see the neighbors I shall give them."



Lebanon lies at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Israel and west of Syria.

Lebanon is a small, war-torn country on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Located on fertile territory at the crossroads of three continents—Africa, Asia, and Europe—it is a valuable and highly desired territory. Serving as an arena for proxy battles between larger and more powerful nations is nothing new for Lebanon, a small country of about four

million on the Mediterranean, sandwiched between Israel and Syria. Since gaining independence from France seven decades ago and through the aftermath of the 1975-90 civil war, Lebanon has been a stage for regional and international power plays. Now, along with Iraq and Syria, its integrity as a state is again being tested.

Armed Palestinian groups began launching attacks against Israel from Lebanon following the Six Day War in 1967. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians live in refugee camps in Lebanon, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) based itself in the country after being expelled from Jordan in 1970.

The outbreak of Lebanon's civil war in 1975 caused the number of armed groups operating in the country to skyrocket. Among them was a radical Shiite militia called the Lebanese Resistance Detachments (known by its Arabic acronym, Amal), which forged an alliance with Khomeini's Shiite regime after Khomeini came to power through the 1979 Iranian revolution. In 1982, Iran created the Hezbollah militia to fight Israeli forces, which had invaded Lebanon to destroy the PLO's Lebanese base and install a pro Israel Maronite regime in Beirut.

Terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon include the radical Shiite militia Hezbollah, several Palestinian groups— Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command—as well as the Abu Nidal Organization, al Jihad, Asbat alAnsar, the Japanese Red Army, and some local radical Sunni Muslim organizations.

Another militant group, Fatah al Islam, which surfaced in 2006, has become one of the country's main security threats and was involved in a deadly clash with Lebanese troops in May 2007. Moreover, since the end of its devastating fifteen year civil war in 1990, Lebanon—a tiny, mountainous Arab state bordered by Israel, Syria, and the Mediterranean Sea—had, until 2005, been largely controlled by Syria, a state sponsor of terrorism.

Hezbollah – the most powerful terrorist group in Lebanon operates with the approval of Syria and receives massive weapons shipments and military training from its founders in Iran. It is based principally in Beirut, and effectively controls Lebanon's Shiite dominated south, and the Bekaa Valley, allowing terrorists to move around these regions with relative impunity. U.S. officials have urged Lebanon and Syria to rein in the group. In 6/30/2015 Terrorism Havens: Lebanon Council on Foreign Relations .July 2006, Hezbollah attacks on northern Israel, including the abduction of two Israeli soldiers at a border station, provoked a massive Israeli military response. Hezbollah responded by launching rockets into northern Israel. The violence came on the heels of an escalation in the Israeli Palestinian crisis in Gaza Strip. Israel's response put pressure on the Lebanese government, highlighting both the conflicting interests of Hezbollah and Lebanon, and Lebanon's inability to disarm the group Hezbollah is also an effective political party in Lebanon and holds twenty three of the 128 seats in the Lebanese parliament. Since 2000, when it successfully drove Israeli troops from a forty kilometer “security zone” in southern Lebanon after twenty two years of occupation, Hezbollah has increasingly asserted its influence among Lebanon's Shiite Muslims—the country's largest religious group—by establishing social programs, hospitals, and schools.

If we list down major terrorist attacks; we came to know that even Americans are also attacked during 1980's and more than 250 Americans were killed in suicide bombing attacks on a U.S. Marine barracks, the U.S. embassy, and the U.S. embassy annex in Lebanon. Following is the list of major terrorist attacks that Lebanon has faced:

- January 24, 2002: Elie Hobeika
- May 20, 2002: Mohammed Jihad Jibril
- August 2, 2003: Ali Hussein Salah

- July 19, 2004: Ghaleb Awali
- February 14, 2005: Rafiq Hariri
- June 2, 2005: Samir Qassir
- December 12, 2005: Gibran Tueni
- May 26, 2006: Mahmud Majzoub
- November 21, 2006: Pierre Gemayel
- June 13, 2007: Walid Eido
- September 19, 2007: Antoine Ghanem
- January 25, 2008: Wissam Eid

Unfortunately the Lebanon government did not take any concrete steps to stop terrorism in the country. The Lebanese government has cooperated in some international counterterrorism measures and has arrested al-Qaeda members. But it backed Hezbollah's 1990s attacks on Israel and refuses to interfere with the group's ongoing attacks against Israeli troops in the disputed border region known as Shebaa Farms. Lebanon has also refused U.S. demands to turn over Lebanese terrorists involved in the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847 and in the abduction, torture, and murder of U.S. hostages from 1984 to 1991. At the same time, the regime has only limited influence over Hezbollah and Palestinian militants. Moreover, it lacks control of some of Beirut and of the lawless, drug ridden Bekaa Valley, as well as of many Palestinian refugee camps and the southern border region.

The last two years have been exceptionally challenging for Lebanon. The Syria crisis has created unprecedented inflows of refugees, now estimated at about a quarter of the population. Security has been severely affected and local communities have been strained. Given the political impasse, the lack of reforms has amplified the macroeconomic imbalances. The fiscal position, in particular, has worsened, with adverse consequences for public debt. 2014 has come at a delicate juncture, with upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections. It is therefore important to urgently strengthen policies and make progress on key structural reforms. Lebanon is awash with 1.5 million refugees from the fighting in Syria, a number that some officials predict will surpass two million by early next year.

In a speech last week to the United Nations General Assembly, Lebanon's Prime Minister Tammam Salam pleaded for more international assistance to deal with the burden of Syrian refugees and its impact on the economy and infrastructure as well as help for the army and security forces, saying the conflict was engulfing Lebanon in a "national catastrophe."

The Syrian regime, Russia and Iran—through their local ally Hezbollah—are pressing the Lebanese government and its security forces to lend support in the widening regional conflict. A visiting senior Iranian official publicly offered the Lebanese army an unspecified grant on Tuesday to help fight "the wicked terrorism" on the border with Syria.

Hopefully God will review and amend his work so Lebanon survives. It is not apparent that the Lebanese are capable of doing so the world has to stand up for them and help them out.

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