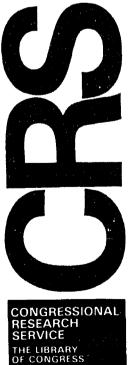CONFLICT IN LEBANON: FROM THE MISSILE CRISIS OF APRIL 1981
THROUGH THE ISRAELI INVASION, AUGUST 1982

by
Ellen B. Laipson
Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs
and
Clyde R. Mark
Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs
Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division

January 17, 1983

DS 120

The Congressional Research Service works exclusively for the Congress, conducting research, analyzing legislation, and providing information at the request of committees, Members, and their staffs.

The Service makes such research available, without partisan bias, in many forms including studies, reports, compilations, digests, and background briefings. Upon request, CRS assists committees in analyzing legislative proposals and issues, and in assessing the possible effects of these proposals and their alternatives. The Service's senior specialists and subject analysts are also available for personal consultations in their respective fields of expertise.

ABSTRACT

An April 1981 Israeli-Syrian incident triggered the Lebanese "Missile Crisis," which in turn led to a Palestinian-Israeli confrontation in south Lebanon in July 1981. U.S. envoy Philip Habib, negotiating an end to the missile crisis, successfully arranged a cease-fire on July 24, 1981, which held until the Israeli invasion of Lebanon on June 6, 1982. Israeli troops destroyed the Syrian missiles, occupied 40 percent of Lebanon, captured or destroyed much of the PLO's weapons, and trapped 15,000 Syrian and PLO troops in west Beirut by the end of June 1982. Lebanese, French, Italian, and American forces monitored the evacuation of Beirut in late August. Events in Lebanon after August 1982 may be followed in CRS Issue Brief 81090, Lebanon: the Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation, from which this background material was drawn.
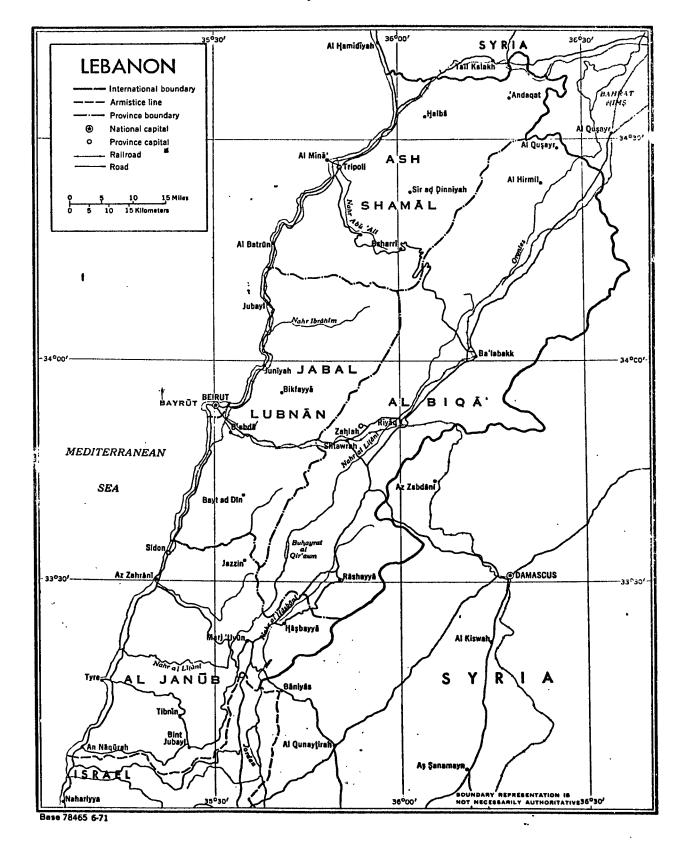
BLANK PAGE

PREFACE

On May 22, 1981, the Congressional Research Service introduced Issue Brief 81090, Lebanon: The Missile Crisis, to assist the Congress in monitoring events in south Lebanon and the increasing tensions between Israel and Syria. The Issue Brief was expanded in July 1981 to include the Palestinian-Israeli confrontation and the subsequent negotiations conducted by U.S. Ambassador Philip Habib. In June 1982, the Issue Brief was changed again, to reflect events following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. So that the Issue Brief can be kept to a manageable length and focused on current issues, information and analysis covering the period between May 1981 and August 1982 has been taken out of it and collected here. Current events from September 1982 on may be followed in Issue Brief 81090, the current title of which is Lebanon: Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation.

BLANK PAGE

Map 1

BLANK PAGE

CONTENTS

CONFLICT IN LEBANON: FROM THE MISSILE CRISIS OF APRIL 1981
THROUGH THE ISRAELI INVASION, AUGUST 1982

I. POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The roots of the current crisis in Lebanon go back several decades. In
1943, Lebanese leaders agreed to an unwritten "national pact" which appor-
tioned seats in the unicameral Chamber of Deputies, the presidency, several
cabinet posts, and positions in the bureaucracy according to religious
affiliation and geography. The national pact established a ratio of six
Christians to five Muslims, based on the census of 1932, in the Chamber of
Deputies and in civil service jobs. The presidency and cabinet positions were
allotted to religious sects according to size; the president was to be a
Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, the Speaker of the
Chamber of Deputies a Shiite Muslim, the Minister of Defense a Druze (a
separate sect associated with the Muslims), the Foreign Minister a Greek
Orthodox, and so on. Similarly, seats in the Chamber and on the cabinet were
apportioned to represent five geographic areas of Lebanon, with the Mount
Lebanon area, a stronghold of the Maronites and the Druze, holding the
greatest number of seats, followed by North Lebanon (about even between Sunni
Muslims and Christians), Beirut (mixed), the Bekaa valley (mostly Muslim), and
south Lebanon (mostly Shiite Muslim). The system worked as long as the
leaders of the various communities cooperated and as long as the population
balance was not altered (which meant no new census could be taken).

But, in later years, many came to believe that the six Christian to five Muslim ratio no longer reflected reality. It was widely believed that the Lebanese Muslim population grew at a faster rate than the Lebanese Christian population. In addition, a large number of Palestinians, predominantly Muslim, had settled permanently in Lebanon. As a result, the Muslims advocated that a new census be taken and a new ratio be fixed according to the census. The Christians maintained that the 1943 national pact fixed the six to five ratio permanently.

The 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the Jordan-Palestinian crisis of 1970 awakened the previously quiescent Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon and interjected the Palestinians into the Lebanese political equation. Armed Palestinian groups, forced out of Jordan, came in conflict with the Lebanese army and with the armed militias of the religious/political communities in Lebanon. The predominately Muslim Palestinians lent political support to the Lebanese Muslims. The Palestinians increased their attacks against Israel from Lebanese territory. Israeli retaliatory and pre-emptive strikes against Palestinians in southern Lebanon dislocated much of the Palestinian and Lebanese population in the area and drew the Lebanese army into conflict with the Israelis. The issue of Israel's attacks on the Palestinians and the growing Palestinian involvement in Lebanon's affairs divided Lebanon; some groups, primarily Christians, viewed the Palestinians as the cause of the growing political strife and the reason for the Israeli attacks; other Lebanese, primarily Muslims, felt a kinship with the Palestinians and voiced the need to support them.

A.   The Lebanese Civil War, 1975-1976

An April 1975 incident between Palestinians and Christians ignited a civil war which killed an estimated 40,000, turned as many as one-third of Lebanon's three million people into refugees, destroyed much of Beirut and other cities, and dislocated the economic, social, and political life of Lebanon. In April 1976, Syrian forces entered Lebanon to protect the right-wing Christians from attacks by the left-wing Muslim and Palestinian forces by creating a buffer zone along the Beirut-to-Damascus road which separated the Christians to the north from the Muslim-Palestinians to the south. The Arab League endorsed the Syrian intervention, and Saudi Arabia, South Yemen, Sudan, and the United Arab Amirates sent military contingents to join the Syrian "Arab Deterrent Force." The United States approved the Syrian peacekeeping role. The other Arab states pulled their contingents out of Lebanon in 1979, leaving only approximately 23,000 Syrian troops.
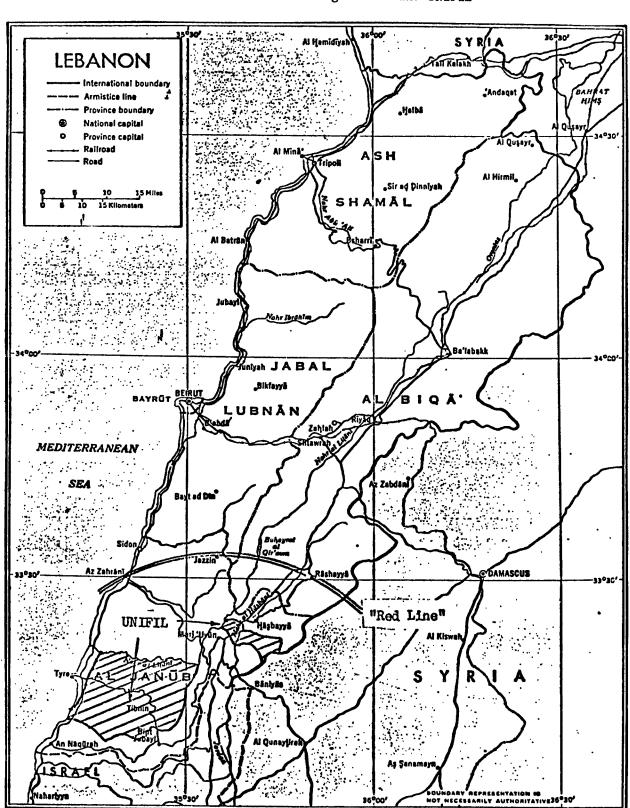
Israel had reservations about the Syrian presence in Lebanon, particularly in southern Lebanon where the Israelis anticipated Syrian assistance for the Palestinian guerrillas attacking Israel. Consequently, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger negotiated an arrangement which had the effect of creating a Syrian sphere of influence in Lebanon. The Israelis claim the arrangement called for a "Red Line" to be drawn across Lebanon, running east from the Mediterranean town of al-Zahrani toward the Qirwan dam and then toward the town of Rashaya and the Syrian-Lebanese border (see map on the following page). According to the Israeli government then in power, the "Red Line" marked the southern limits of permissible Syrian operations. Israel cautioned that any movement of Syrian forces south of the line would trigger

Map 2

Lebanon: The "Red Line" Agreement and UNIFIL

an Israeli military response. Also, the Israelis said the "Red Line" agreement included a Syrian pledge not to fly military aircraft over Lebanon and not to emplace anti-aircraft missiles in Lebanon.

Syria denied having agreed to the "Red Line" and said its forces could move anywhere within Lebanon. Despite the denial, Syrian forces remained well north of the "Red Line," occupying the Beirut-Shtawrah-Damascus road. Syrian troops stayed out of the Bekaa valley south of where the road crossed the Syrian-Lebanese frontier. Although there were occasional Israeli-Syrian air clashes, there were no regular Syrian flights over Lebanon and no anti-aircraft missiles in Lebanon. The "Red Line" became a de facto truce line.

Israeli air, ground, and naval units continued to attack Palestinian guerrilla strongholds north of the "Red Line" in retaliation for Palestinian raids into Israel. Israeli reconnaissance planes regularly flew over all of Lebanon. But despite this relative freedom of action in Lebanon, the Begin government, elected in May 1977, denounced the "Red Line," saying Israel would not be constrained by the arrangement in its operations against Palestinian strongholds. The Begin government also reversed the previous government's policy of launching only retaliatory strikes and began to launch pre-emptive strikes against Palestinian bases.

B. The Litani Invasion, 1978

On March 14, 1978, Israel sent 20,000 to 30,000 troops across its northern border into southern Lebanon, ostensibly to clear out Palestinian guerrillas responsible for an attack on two Israeli buses on the Tel Aviv-Haifa road three days before. But unlike other Israeli incursions into

southern Lebanon when Israeli forces attacked specific targets, the Israeli force in March 1978 occupied the whole southern Lebanon region up to the Litani River. United Nations Security Council Resolutions 425 and 426 called for an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the formation of a United Nations peacekeeping force to be stationed between the Lebanese-Palestinian forces and the Israeli border. By the time the Israelis withdrew from Lebanon on June 13, the 6,000-man, seven-nation United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), later raised to 7,000 troops from 9 nations, was emplaced in a 10 mile wide buffer zone reaching east to west across Lebanon south of the Litani River. A second UNIFIL buffer zone about 3 miles wide stretched from the Litani to the Syrian border north of the Lebanese town of Marjayun. There were two gaps in the UNIFIL line, one from the Litani south to the Mediterranean city of Tyre and a second from Marjayun south and then turning west along the Israeli border. The first wedge along the Mediterranean was controlled by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the second two-mile-wide strip south from Marjayun and along the Lebanon-Israel border was controlled by the 2,000-man "Free Lebanon" forces under the command of former Lebanese army Major Saad Haddad. Haddad's forces were -- and continue to be --supported and supplied by the Israelis.

The UNIFIL buffer zone had the effect of creating a PLO controlled zone north of the Litani River and south of the "Red Line," theoretically out of reach of Israeli attacks and beyond the control of the Syrians. In practice, the Israelis continued to hit Palestinian guerrillas north of the Litani with air strikes and artillery that reached over UNIFIL or by naval landings that outflanked the UNIFIL line. And, rather than constrain the Palestinians from

attacking Israel, the Syrians assisted the Palestinians with arms and training. Thus, UNIFIL was in the middle, unable to stop infiltrators because it was spread too thin along the buffer zone, and unable to stop a full military attack from either side because its 6,000-man force was too small. What position the United Nations would take if UNIFIL were caught in the middle of a conflict between the Israeli "Free-Lebanon" forces and the PLO-Lebanese-Syrian forces was an open question until June 1982, when UNIFIL forces tried, unsuccessfully, to impede the Israeli invasion.

C. Lebanese Political Alignments, Civil War to 1981

The approximately 30 ethnic-religious-political groups in Lebanon were polarized into two camps by the 1975-1976 civil war. The so-called Christian-right camp was led by the Phalangists, primarily Maronite Christians (a Uniate sect of the Roman Catholic church), conservative, capitalist, and nationalist. In August 1980, the Phalange, led by Bashir Jumayyil of the Jumayyil family, consolidated its power in, and leadership over, the Christian-right community by defeating its rival, the National Liberal Party, a Maronite-Greek Orthodox party led by the Shamun family. Some observers estimated that the 10 or 12 Christian-right groups then under the nominal control of the Phalange could muster some 50,000 troops (the estimates range from 30,000 to 80,000). The Phalange said it was allied with the Haddad forces in the south following the Litani operation of 1978. There were reports that the Phalange and the Israelis were cooperating directly.

Opposing the Christian-right was the National Movement, a Muslim-left coalition of 13 groups headed by Druze leader Walid Junblatt. The National Movement could muster some 6,000 troops, and was allied with Amal, a Shiite Muslim group with 5,000 troops; the Palestine Liberation Organization, itself a coalition of 8 to 10 groups with a total of 20,000 troops; the Murabitun, a Sunni Muslim group with a few thousand troops; and 23,000 Syrian troops (the Arab Deterrent Force). The 25,000-man Lebanese Army for the most part remained out of the fighting between Christian-right and the National Movement, although both sides accused the Lebanese Army of aiding the opposition.

The Syrian Army intervened in Lebanon in April 1976 to protect the Phalangists, then fighting alone, from the Muslim-leftists and Palestinians. But, in February 1978, the Phalangists joined with a Lebanese Army unit in an attack on a Syrian army barracks at Fayadiya, and since then the Syrians and the Phalangists have been rivals. The rivalry intensified after the Litani invasion, when the Israelis supported the Haddad forces and reports circulated that the Phalange and the Israelis were cooperating.

II. THE MISSILE CRISIS, 1981

A series of Syrian-Phalangist clashes began in January 1981 around the mountain city of Zahlah, east of Beirut, and quickly spread to Beirut where the PLO-Muslim-leftist forces joined the battle against the right-wing Christians. The Syrians pulled out of Zahlah in early January, leaving the city to the Phalangists, but the Phalangist forces continued pushing south

toward the Beirut-Damascus road and into the Bekaa valley. Syrian forces resisted the Phalangist move because the Syrians view the Bekaa valley, running northeast from Israel, as an Israeli invasion route toward Syria.

The Syrian feeling of vulnerability was heightened by Phalangist statements that the right-wing Christians in the center of Lebanon would unite with the Israeli-supported Christian forces of Major Haddad in the far south. Thus, the Syrians fought back toward Zahlah, re-entered the city, and seized the Sannin ridge northwest of Zahlan, previously held by the Christians. A Syrian-Phalangist artillery battle at Zahlah in early April 1981 triggered Syrian air strikes against Phalangist strongholds. Israel helped its Phalangist "allies" by bombing and strafing Syrian positions and shooting down two Syrian helicopters on April 28, one near Zahlah and one near the Syrian airfield at Riyaq in the Bekaa valley. The next day, Syria moved surface-to-air missiles (SAM-3 and SAM-6) into the Riyaq area to defend Syrian planes and helicopters against further Israeli attacks. The Israeli government said the SAMs constituted a direct threat to Israeli security. Israel threatened to destroy the missile sites if the Syrians did not withdraw them. The Israelis also said that they would not allow the Syrians to annihilate the Christian forces in Lebanon. The Syrians said they were only trying to keep the right-Christian forces separated from the left-Muslim-PLO forces and to defend their own forces from Israeli attacks.

A. An Inevitable Crisis?

The ingredients of a potentially major "crisis" were in place: the Syrian refusal to remove the anti-aircraft missiles from Lebanon; the Israeli charge that the missiles threatened Israel's security and the Israeli vow to destroy the missiles; the Christian Phalangist challenge to Syrian control of the central road; the Phalangist appeal for an Israeli alliance; and Muslim-leftist-PLO support for the Syrians. UNIFIL, caught in the middle of the PLO-Muslim-leftist artillery exchanges with Haddad forces in the far south, could not stop a Syrian-Israeli confrontation over the Bekaa missiles.

As in some past Arab-Israeli disputes, the crisis appeared to have evolved out of a series of unplanned incidents, miscalculations, and posturing by the parties involved: an incident such as the Syrian-Phalangist skirmish outside Zahlah in January, a miscalculation such as the Syrian emplacement of the missiles near Riyaq on April 29 without anticipating an Israeli reaction, and the posturing of the Israelis and the Syrians over the need to remove threats to their security. But some analysts, not convinced that the missile crisis was unplanned, speculated that one of the major actors purposely may have triggered the crisis:

-- Some observers suggested that the Soviets prompted the Syrians to attack the Phalangists at Zahlah and move the missiles into Lebanon in order to create a crisis that would divert world attention from Soviet actions in Afghanistan or Poland, to overshadow the Egyptian-Israeli-American West Bank/ Gaza Strip talks, or to test the new Reagan Administration. It was also

suggested that the Soviet Union sought a Syrian confrontation with Israel in order to regain Arab favor lost when the Soviets did not support the Iraqis in the Iraq-Iran war.

-- Some analysts suggested that Syria, acting without Soviet prompting, triggered the crisis in the hope that a full-scale war would result in Lebanon's dismemberment and that Syria could annex much of the territory, fulfilling the dream of a "greater Syria" that went back to World War I. Others speculated that Syria was trying to destroy or cripple the Lebanese Christians, or was trying to ruin the West Bank/Gaza talks, or was trying to regain lost prominence in the Arab world by reviving the confrontation with Israel.

-- Another group of analysts suggested that Israeli Prime Minister Begin triggered the crisis because he needed a unifying "wolf-at-the-door" issue to buttress his re-election campaign, or that Israel interfered in the Syrian-Phalangist conflict seeking an excuse to invade Lebanon and annex the southern region to fulfill partially the dream of a "greater Israel." Others speculated that Israel wanted Lebanon partitioned into two states, one an Israeli-protected Christian state and the other a Syrian-protected Muslim state.

-- Still other analysts suggested that the Phalangists started the conflict with Syria in the hope that Israel would invade Lebanon to relieve the beleagured Phalangists and establish an Israeli-protected Christian state. Some analysts even suggested that the PLO-Muslim-leftist forces started the conflict with the intention of getting Syrian support to destroy the Christians.

Such interpretations, whether or not they reflected the actual causes of the current crisis, may have affected subsequent decisions made by the contending parties.

B.   Efforts To Resolve the Crisis

While the first phase of the Lebanese "crisis," between January and the end of April 1981, was serious and drew the attention of world leaders, it did not appear to threaten world peace directly. The first phase, a continuation of the Lebanese civil war, was limited to the ground conflict between the Syrian-leftist-Muslim-PLO forces and the Phalangist-rightist-Christian forces. Outside powers were not directly involved, although French, American, Israeli, Soviet, and other Arab leaders expressed their concern over the deterioration of the Lebanese situation, and some suggested international intervention, either by creating a new United Nations force or expanding UNIFIL. But the "crisis" took on a new international dimension with the introduction of the Syrian missiles and the immediate threat of an Israeli attack to remove the missiles. World attention shifted to the missiles, and the prospect that the "missile crisis" could trigger another Middle East war.

On April 29, the day the Syrians moved the missiles to Lebanon, the most immediate U.S. concern appeared to be postponing the inevitable Israeli strike long enough to allow a U.S. mediating effort to resolve the crisis peacefully. State Department spokesman Dean Fischer said on April 29 that the United States had not given the "green light" to Israel to destroy the missiles, a message presumably repeated in Israel by U.S. Ambassador Samuel Lewis. The public announcement that the United States did not approve of an Israeli

strike against the missiles may have been necessary to reverse a widely held view in the Middle East that the Reagan Administration, through National Security Council advisor Richard Allen, gave Israel blanket approval for raids into Lebanon. Allen told ABC's "20/20" program on April 2 that "hot pursuit" which "reaches to the source of terrorism" was "justified."

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis met repeatedly with Israeli officials to urge restraint. According to news accounts, U.S. Ambassador to Syria, Talcott Seelye, tried unsuccessfully to meet with Syrian officials. On May 3, President Reagan sent a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Begin (delivered May 4 by Lewis), asking the Israelis to delay military action against the missiles in order to allow time for the diplomatic efforts. On May 5, Reagan announced that retired State Department official Philip Habib would go to Lebanon, Syria, and Israel to seek a peaceful resolution of the missile crisis.

Almost immediately after the Syrian missiles appeared in Lebanon, the United States contacted Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin in Washington and Soviet officials in Moscow to enlist Soviet support for a mediated resolution to the crisis. Western press sources in Moscow and Washington reported that the Soviets were cooperating with the American mediating effort. On May 6, Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Korniyenko arrived in Damascus, presumably to discuss the missiles. The appearance of Soviet cooperation faded, however, after May 9, when Korniyenko left Damascus and Soviet press sources began describing the missile crisis as U.S.-inspired. On May 24, Prime Minister Begin said Soviet advisors were in Lebanon with the Syrian

missile detachments, which the Soviets denied on May 25 and again on May 28. By late May, the Soviets were saying that Habib was aggravating the crisis, not trying to resolve it.

C. The First Habib Mission

U.S. envoy Philip Habib began his mission in Beirut on May 8. By May 27, when he returned to the United States for consultations, he had already traveled to Damascus, then to Israel, back to Syria, then again to Israel, to Saudi Arabia, Syria, Israel, Beirut, and again to Israel. A review of the meetings he had during this period helps to clarify the complexity of the taks that confronted him.

Habib arrived in Beirut on May 8 to meet with Lebanese officials. On May 9, he met with Phalangist leaders Pierre and Bashir Jumayyil, National Liberal Party leader Kamil Shamun, and Druze leader Walid Junblatt of the National Movement. Habib went on to Syria for two days of meetings with President al-Assad and Foreign Minister Khaddam. As Habib was arriving in Damascus, PLO leader Yasir Arafat and Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Korniyenko were leaving, Arafat after a one-day stay to report on his trip to the Arabian Peninsula and Korniyenko after a three-day visit to "exchange viewpoints." The Korniyenko visit appeared to be connected to the "missile crisis."

Habib went to Israel on May 11, where he met with government and military officials, as well as members of the Labor Party, Begin's opposition. According to press reports, Habib was carrying a "compromise proposal" which called for an Israeli promise not to fly over central or northern Lebanon and a

Syrian promise to use the missiles only to defend against Israeli planes attacking Syrian positions. Both Israeli and Syrian sources denied that they had accepted Habib's "compromise proposal." Israel continued to demand the withdrawal of the missiles and to threaten to use air strikes to destroy them if they were not withdrawn. Syria continued to refuse to withdraw the missiles and said they would be used to defend against Israeli flights over the Bekaa valley and central Lebanon. On May 13, Philip Habib returned to Damascus for further talks. On the night of May 14, he returned to Israel, where he met on May 15 with Begin, Foreign Minister Shamir, and others. Israeli press accounts said the meetings were secret, but that it appeared that Habib came back from Damascus "empty-handed."

The crisis took on a new urgency on May 14, when the Syrians shot down an Israeli pilotless reconnaissance drone over the Bekaa valley with the SAMs stationed in Lebanon. Israel said the downing of the drone proved that the missiles were a direct threat to Israeli security and must be removed. A similar missile that had been fired from Syria on May 12 had missed the Israeli target over Bekaa. The Israelis appeared to dismiss that incident because the missiles came from Syrian, not Lebanese, territory.

Tensions increased on May 15, as Habib met with the Israelis. The Israelis reported that Syria was making "preparatory moves" in the Golan Heights region, the Voice of Lebanon (right-wing) reported that Syria had moved three additional brigades into Lebanon, and Beirut radio reported that American, Soviet, and Israeli warships were off the Lebanese and Syrian coasts. U.S. envoy Philip Habib announced that he would go to Saudi Arabia the next day.

By May 16, the Arab world, with two exceptions, was supporting the Syrian stand; the exceptions were Egypt, which announced it would remain neutral in the missile crisis, and Jordan, which had been involved in a dispute with the Syrians and was remaining silent. Habib began his third round of talks in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on May 16, apparently with the intention of convincing the Saudis to use their influence in Damascus in a search for a way out of the stalemated talks. It was assumed that Saudi influence in Syria took two forms: first, Saudi prestige as a leading oil producer, political moderate, and a leader of the Arab world; and second, Saudi financial contributions to Syria. But Saudi participation in the diplomatic effort was threatened on May 18, when Begin said the Saudis were "not capable of playing a useful role" in the negotiations, that the regime was "reactionary" and "medieval," and that Saudi Arabia was "one of the most corrupt states in the world." Two days later, Begin conceded that "the Saudis are trying to help" in the negotiations. Prime Minister Begin also said the cabinet had agreed not to set a time limit on the Habib mission, in an effect to hold open the Israeli option of using force to remove the missiles as long as the United States was willing to seek a compromise solution.

U.S. envoy Philip Habib met with Syrian officials on May 18, while in Lebanon serious fighting erupted around Beirut and along the Lebanon-Israel border. Reports from Beirut and Damascus stated that the Israelis moved troops, tanks, and artillery up to the Lebanese border, and a report the day before said Israeli forces had moved into the "Free Lebanon" area. On May 19, Habib flew back to Israel to meet with Prime Minister Begin and Foreign Minister Shamir. One report from Beirut said Habib had proposed that the

Lebanese army replace the Syrian army around Zahlah and the Sannin Heights, but that the proposal had been rejected by the National Movement in Lebanon. The reports of troop movements combined with the failure of the parties to accept any of Habib's compromises contributed to a general feeling that a conflict was near. Israel's Foreign Minister Shamir punctuated that feeling when he said after a meeting with Habib that the time spent in negotiations was being used by the Syrians to build up their presence in Lebanon and that Israel would take action to negate that pressure.

On May 20, Habib met with Israeli officials. After a cabinet meeting following the Habib meeting, Prime Minister Begin said Israel would not go to war unless attacked by Syria first. Foreign Minister Shamir tempered his comments of the day before by saying that Israeli action against the missiles was not a matter of hours or days, but then added that Israel could not wait weeks or months for a resolution of the crisis.

On May 21, Syrian President al-Assad told foreign journalists that Habib was carrying "Israeli demands" in his shuttling between capitals, and not "American proposals" that could lead to a resolution of the crisis. Begin responded by saying that Habib was indeed offering proposals and that Israel was not making demands. Begin listed three conditions for a resolution of the crisis: (1) Syria must withdraw the missiles from Lebanon and missiles emplaced along the Syrian-Lebanese border since the crisis began, and must offer a "commitment" not to use anti-aircraft missiles against Israeli planes over Lebanon, (2) Syrian troops must leave the Sannin ridge in Lebanon, and (3) Syria must end the "siege" of Zahlah. The Israeli Prime Minister repeated his earlier statements that Israel would not agree to limit its reconnaissance

flights over Lebanon as part of a deal in exchange for the missile withdrawal. Meanwhile, Syria claimed to have shot down another Israeli plane, which the Israelis denied, and Voice of Palestine radio (PLO) said Israeli tanks had moved into Marjayun in Lebanon.

U.S. envoy Philip Habib went to Beirut on May 22, the same day Arab foreign ministers began a summit conference in Tunisia on the missile crisis. Palestinian sources in Lebanon said Israeli frogmen sank a cargo ship in the port of Sidon, and reports from Beirut and Damascus said two Israeli planes were shot down over Lebanon by Syrian missiles. Israel admitted that one drone had been lost over Lebanon.

The Arab League Foreign Ministers, meeting in Tunis on May 23, pledged continued support for Syria in the confrontation with Israel. The Foreign Ministers appealed to the United States to end its support and encouragement for Israeli "aggression."

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported on May 24 that Israel had made a written commitment to Bashir Jumayyil, head of the Phalangist militia, to use Israeli air power to defend the Christians against Syrian air strikes. At first, Begin's office denied the report but later said that a December 1979 pledge of support for the Phalangists had been reconfirmed in early April 1981. Prime Minister Begin also said that Soviet advisors were with the Syrian missile batteries in Lebanon (which the Soviet Union denied) and that Libyan troops and advisors were with the PLO along the Mediterranean coast north of the Litani River. Philip Habib left Beirut, not for Damascus as expected but for Israel.

On May 25, missiles fired from Syrian territory downed a third Israeli pilotless reconnaissance drone over the Bekaa valley in Lebanon. In Beirut, the American, Egyptian, and Sudanese embassies were hit by rockets and grenades (Egypt's President al-Sadat was in Khartum visiting President Numayri, al-Sadat's first direct contact with another Arab leader since he signed the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty on March 26, 1979). Prime Minister Begin said he would go to Beirut or would invite Lebanon's President Ilyas Sarkis to Israel to sign a peace treaty between the two countries. Official circles in Beirut rejected the offer. Reports from Tel Aviv said U.S. envoy Philip Habib was awaiting a reply from Saudi Arabia on a new cease-fire proposal to end the missile crisis.

On May 27, Philip Habib returned to Washington. The White House said the peace mission had not failed and that Habib would return to the Middle East after "consultations." Syrian and Israeli sources disagreed, saying there was nothing left for Habib to do to resolve the crisis peacefully.

On May 28, Israel claimed Libyan advisors stationed at a PLO base near Damur, 15 miles south of Beirut, fired SAM-9 missiles at Israeli reconnaissance planes. Israeli planes attacked the missile sites and PLO bases in the area, destroying, according to the Israelis, 4 batteries (16 missiles) of the advanced SAM-9s. Lebanese sources said the Israeli air attacks killed between 25 and 80 people in Palestinian refugee camps. At the same time, Lebanese Christian forces under Major Haddad and PLO forces began an artillery exchange in the south.

D.   Increased Tensions, May 29 - June 9, 1981

On May 29, Israeli ships shelled PLO positions along the south Lebanon coast, and, according to reports, Israeli ground forces moved into the southern Lebanon area controlled by Major Haddad and his "Free Lebanon" movement. Between May 29 and June 2, fighting intensified between Syrian and Phalangist forces in Beirut and around Zahlah. Israeli sources claimed Syrian troops along the Golan Heights frontier were placed on an "alert" status. Israeli planes hit PLO bases in Lebanon and Israeli artillery shelled al-Nabatiyah in southern Lebanon on June 2. The next day, Israeli gunboats shelled Nahr al-Barid in northern Lebanon.

In Israel, Prime Minister Begin said on June 1 that the Habib mission had failed and that Israel could destroy the Syrian missiles in Lebanon in two hours. Two days later, Begin's government defeated a Knesset move by the Labor party opposition to condemn Begin for having offered a protective commitment to the Lebanese Phalangists. During his meeting with Egyptian President al-Sadat on June 5 at Sharm al-Shaykh, Begin said that Israel would give the United States more time to resolve the missile crisis through diplomatic means.

On June 7, foreign ministers from Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria, and Saudi Arabia met in Beirut to discuss: (1) a cease-fire in the Lebanese fighting; (2) adding troops from other Arab states to the all-Syrian Arab Deterrent Force; and (3) a Saudi proposal made three days before to remove heavy weapons from Beirut and Zahlah. The foreign ministers' efforts appeared to be tied to Habib's discussion with the Saudis in May. Habib was scheduled to return to Beirut on June 8.

Israel announced on June 8 that the previous day its planes had bombed and destroyed the Iraqi nuclear facility outside Baghdad. Israel feared that the almost completed, French-built facility would be used to produce nuclear weapons. The Israeli attack raised several questions relating to the Lebanese missile crisis and Philip Habib's mediating efforts. Did the attack divert world attention away from the Lebanese crisis, thus enabling Habib to complete his "quiet diplomacy," or might Arab states end their talks on Lebanon to concentrate on their reaction to the Iraqi incident? Second, would the Arabs refuse to negotiate further with the United States because Arab leaders believed the United States approved the Israeli attack and the Israeli use of American planes? Future Arab contacts with the United States might have depended upon how strongly the United States condemned the Israeli attack. And third, would the attack encourage Arab unity? The inter-Arab division caused by the Iraq-Iran war had been partially healed by the Lebanese missile crisis, and it appeared that the Israeli attack on Iraq could complete the healing and restore the Arab unity that existed after the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Against this backdrop of uncertainty, Philip Habib returned to Beirut on June 9.

E.   The Second Habib Mission

After four days in the Lebanese capital, Habib went to Saudi Arabia on June 13, then to Syria on June 15, and to Israel on June 18. Habib returned to Saudi Arabia on June 19 and flew on to Beirut on June 22. Habib left Beirut on June 25 for Washington.

Syrian President al-Assad said on June 11 that Syria would destroy Israeli planes sent to attack the missiles, a threat that was answered by Begin on June 14 when he said Israel would destroy the missiles. Begin repeated his statement on June 16, the same day Israeli Military Intelligence Chief Sagi said Syria was preparing for a "limited war" against Israel. Also on June 16, President Reagan told a press conference that the Syrian missiles in Lebanon were "offensive" and were aimed at Israel. The tensions relaxed on June 18, when Begin told Habib in Jerusalem that Israel would give the U.S. envoy more time to arrange a compromise despite the lack of progress in the talks.

During Habib's last week in the area, several rumors or news leaks circulated that supposedly described the compromise being arranged. One story suggested that the Syrians would promise not to use the missiles against Israeli reconnaissance flights and would withdraw the missiles in six months, time enough to win their point that they could move the missiles into Lebanon and would not back down before Israeli threats. Another story suggested that other Arab nations would send forces to Lebanon to join the Syrian troops in the Arab Deterrent Forces, and during the placement of these forces the Syrians would remove the missiles. Another story suggested that all heavy weapons, tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, and missiles, would be removed from Lebanon by both Syria and Israel. And finally, one story suggested that the Lebanese army would replace Syrian and Phalangist forces at key points, such as Zahlah, the Beirut-to-Damascus road, and the Sannin ridge. One news story from Israel on June 23 said Begin had told the United States that Israel would not attack the missiles until after the Israeli election on

June 30. On June 22, Begin said that some of his threats to destroy the
missiles were intended to cover Israeli preparations for the attack against
the Iraqi nuclear facility. On June 24, the Arab foreign ministers from
Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia announced that other Arab states
would be joining the Arab Deterrent Force in Lebanon and that arrangements
were being made for the Lebanese army to move into Zahlah. On June 30, the
first of the Lebanese units began taking positions around the beleaguered city
as Syrian forces withdrew. Reports from Beirut on July 1 said Syria was with-
drawing the surface-to-air missiles from the Bekaa valley, but the reports
proved false.

F.   The Third Habib Mission

While Philip Habib was in Washington, the foreign ministers of Saudi
Arabia, Lebanon, Syria, and Kuwait met in Bayt al-Din, Lebanon, on July 4 and
5, to continue their discussions of a comprehensive resolution of the Lebanese
situation that would include a solution to the missile crisis. On July 6,
President Reagan met with Habib in preparation for the envoy's return to the
Middle East on July 8. Habib arrived in Beirut on July 9, went to Israel on
July 12, and on to Egypt and Saudi Arabia on July 13. Habib returned to
Israel on July 17.

Habib's negotiations appeared to be coordinated with the efforts of the
Arab foreign ministers to arrange a comprehensive settlement. But the focus
shifted away from the Syrian missiles and the comprehensive resolution after
the July 10 afternoon Israeli air and artillery attacks against Palestinian
locations in south Lebanon. The Palestinians retaliated for the Israeli

strikes by launching Katyusha rockets into northern Israel on the night of July 10, establishing a pattern of week-long Israeli strikes and Palestinian retaliations. On July 17, Habib returned to Israel, carrying what the media described as a "mandate" from President Reagan to negotiate a cease-fire between the Israelis and the Palestinians. For the time being, Habib stopped his search for a compromise on the missiles and began to press for a cease-fire.

Over the next several months, the missiles appeared less important than the conflict in southern Lebanon. On September 7, Israeli television speculated that the United States believed the missiles were less urgent than the cease-fire. Voice of Lebanon reported on September 29 that Syria withdrew some but not all the missiles from the Bekaa. Israeli radio reported on October 23 that U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Morris Draper was visiting the Middle East to arrange for the return in mid-November of U.S. Ambassador Philip Habib, who would negotiate both the removal of the missiles and a resolution of the Lebanese conflict. In a November 3 speech to the Knesset, Prime Minister Begin repeated his earlier statement that Israel could destroy the Syrian missiles in two hours without losing any Israeli planes. Begin said the United States asked for more time to negotiate a resolution of the missile problem, which Israel accepted, but Begin added that if the missiles posed a threat to Israel, Israel would destroy the missiles. Begin appeared to be contradicting his earlier statements that the missiles were a threat to Israel.

III. CONFRONTATION IN SOUTH LEBANON

In the morning of July 10, Major Haddad's "Free Lebanon" forces shelled Palestinian positions near Hasbayah. In the afternoon, Israeli planes attacked what the Israelis described as Katyusha rocket launching sites and ammunition storage areas along the coast near al-Zahrani and along the Litani River. That night, Palestinians fired Katyushas into the northern Israeli city of Qiryat Shemona. July 11 was quiet, but the Israelis resumed their air attacks on July 12 at Damur, hitting a depot of recently arrived arms and the headquarters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine -- General Command. There were no major clashes across the Lebanon-Israel border on July 13, but on July 14 Israeli ships, planes, and artillery struck several Palestinian areas in south Lebanon. Israeli army chief of staff Rafael Eytan said the strikes were intended to destroy Palestinian military equipment, including recently delivered tanks, and to disrupt the Palestinian forces from reorganizing into a conventional army. The next day, according to UNIFIL observers, Palestinians launched some 300 Katyushas into northern Israel and the "Free Lebanon" zone of south Lebanon. A "Voice of Palestine" radio (PLO) commentator said the Katyusha attack was retaliation for the Israeli attacks of July 14.

Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Tzipori said on July 16, as more Katyushas were falling on northern Israel, that Israel would retaliate. On the afternoon of July 16, Israeli planes hit Sidon, al-Zahrani, Nabatiyah,

and several other sites, concentrating on bridges across the Litani and the Zahrani rivers to stop the Palestinian resupply of arms and rockets heading south from Beirut. On July 17, as Habib was returning to Israel to begin the cease-fire negotiations, Israeli planes bombed and strafed Palestinian refugee camps and residential areas of west Beirut. Israeli military officials said the planes concentrated on the headquarters of al-Fatah and other Palestinian guerrilla groups that were located in buildings in the residential areas. Prime Minister Begin said the Palestinians would no longer be able to "hide" among the civilian population of Lebanon, and that the responsibility for civilian casualties in Beirut rested with the Palestinian guerrilla leaders who purposely placed their headquarters in populated areas. In the period between July 10 and July 17, Israeli attacks killed over 360 people in Lebanon (300 of them in Beirut on July 17) and wounded over 1,000 (about 800 of them in Beirut). In the same period, Palestinian artillery and rockets killed 3 Israelis and wounded more than 40 others.

From press reports, it appeared that Philip Habib had negotiated a cease-fire in southern Lebanon with the Israelis, and cooperated with the Lebanese government, United Nations officials, and Saudi diplomats to coordinate his negotiations with the other parties in the dispute, including the Syrians, the Palestinians, and the "joint command" of the National Movement in Lebanon. On July 21, Begin said the cabinet approved a Habib negotiating effort to "establish peaceful relations" with Lebanon, but would not approve any direct or indirect negotiations with the PLO. Israel continued to insist that the arrangement was not a cease-fire because a cease-fire would imply Israeli recognition of the PLO. The same day, PLO head Arafat told the Saudi

Ambassador to Lebanon that the PLO would accept a cease-fire if the Israelis stopped attacking south Lebanon. Habib returned to Israel from a one day trip to Beirut on July 23, the same day UNIFIL commander William Callaghan announced that the PLO accepted a cease-fire. On July 24, Habib announced that a cease-fire would go into effect at 13:30 local time (11:30 GMT, 6:30 a.m. EDT), and Begin told reporters that Israel "endorsed" Habib's statement. During the seven day Habib-Saudi-UNIFIL negotiations, fighting continued in south Lebanon with artillery exchanges each day. Three Israelis were killed and several were wounded by rocket and artillery fire into northern Israel; and some 50 Palestinians and Lebanese were killed, most of them during an Israeli air and sea attack on the Sidon and al-Zahrani areas on July 22.

The July 24, 1981, cease-fire held, although each side claimed the other violated the cease-fire. There were some scattered artillery and rocket rounds fired across the border during the first week, and the Israelis claimed to have shot down a Syrian MiG-23 on July 29, the same day the Syrians moved troops into a Christian area along the coast near Juniyah in early September. Israeli radio reported on September 8 that the PLO had committed 15 cease-fire violations since July 24. Israeli radio reported a PLO violation near Marjayun on October 22, and Beirut radio reported Israel violated the cease-fire by building roads, erecting barbed wire barriers, and cutting water pipes in the same area on October 26. The next day, ITIM (the Israeli news agency) said Israeli officials reported 10 PLO infiltration attempts in the previous 4 days, all through the Norwegian UNIFIL contingent in the Marjayun area. Beirut radio reported on October 29 that Syrian troops had withdrawn from the Jazzin area east of Sidon, a reversal of the usual claims of cease-fire violations.

Palestinian sources claimed Israel shelled south Lebanon on November 10; both Israel and UNIFIL denied the report. The same day, Israeli Defense Minister Sharon said the PLO had violated the cease-fire "about 20 times" since July 24.

Each side accused the other of introducing heavy weapons into the battle zone. Voice of Palestine radio (PLO) said on July 29 that Israel moved artillery and armored personnel carriers into the "Free Lebanon" zone. Damascus radio claimed on September 2 that Israel delivered three Russian-built tanks captured from Egypt in 1973 to the Phalangist forces. The next day Israel radio claimed the PLO had moved 13 batteries of artillery and rockets into fortified positions in the south. The radio commented that Israel was considering a pre-emptive strike against the PLO positions. A Haaretz newspaper commentary of November 3 suggested that Defense Minister Sharon was advocating action against the PLO arms build-up unless the United States heeded the Israeli "signals" to use its diplomatic offices to dissuade the PLO from further moves. On November 10, the Jerusalem Post reported Sharon as saying Israel may have no choice but to abandon the cease-fire and take action against the Palestinians in south Lebanon.

A.   Continuing Negotiations and the Fourth Habib Mission

Meanwhile, the "Arab Follow-Up Committee," Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab League, continued holding meetings to discuss a resolution to the Lebanon problem, including the missiles, the left-right war inside Lebanon, and the PLO-Israeli war in the south. The "Arab Follow-Up Committee" met on July 26, August 15, September 3, October 27, and November 8. From

these meetings and possibly other sources, several rumors circulated concerning so-called peace plans. On August 4, Lebanon's Prime Minister Shafiq al-Wazzan denied that his country was considering a U.S. proposal to expand UNIFIL. One report from Lebanon on August 11 said the United States proposed increasing UNIFIL from 6,000 up to 16,000 troops and giving UNIFIL control over Lebanon south of the Litani River. Israeli radio reported on September 8 that an "American plan" under consideration called for strengthening the Lebanese army to occupy the whole country and asked the Israelis to cut their ties to Haddad. The radio said Prime Minister Begin rejected the plan because he feared the absence of an Israeli presence in Lebanon would give the whole country to Syria. The Jerusalem Post reported on October 4 that Haddad agreed to a U.S. proposal to withdraw all Israeli forces from south Lebanon, "integrate" the "Free Lebanon" forces into the Lebanese army, and give UNIFIL control south of the Litani. Haddad denied the report. Beirut radio said after the November 8 "Arab Follow-Up Committee" meeting that the committee proposed a joint Lebanese-Syrian coastal patrol to stop arms shipments into Lebanon and also proposed that the Lebanese army occupy the buffer zone between the Syrian forces and the Phalangists.

Whatever the validity of such "peace plan" rumors, it appeared that most of the major actors were awaiting a return of U.S. Ambassador Philip Habib because Habib provided the link between Israel and the Arab side. While the "Arab Follow-Up Committee" may have made progress in private, there was little public information about its proposals for a settlement. Whatever resolutions it may have fashioned eventually would have to be accepted by Israel, and Habib was the link to Israel.

Ambassador Philip Habib returned to Beirut on November 29, 1981, went on
to Damascus on December 2, to Amman on December 3, to Israel on December 4, to
Saudi Arabia on December 5, back to Israel on December 7, and back to Beirut
on December 9, before returning to Washington on December 10. There was
little press coverage of Habib's meetings with regional leaders -- possibly
through prior agreement among all involved in the discussions -- and little
information available on the progress, if any, in the talks to resolve the
missile problem or to extend the cease-fire in southern Lebanon. The
atmosphere surrounding the talks may have been soured, at least for the Arabs,
by the announcement on November 30, one day after Habib arrived in Lebanon,
that the United States and Israel signed a Memorandum of Understanding on
strategic cooperation. On December 14, after Habib returned to the United
States, the Israeli Knesset annexed the Golan Heights, an act which the Arabs
viewed as Israeli expansionism and rejection of a negotiated settlement.
Israel said it annexed the Golan Heights because Syria refused to negotiate
and because the Israelis viewed the Golan as a vital security area. In
response to the Golan annexation, the United States suspended the Memorandum
of Understanding with Israel on December 18, and on December 20 Israeli Prime
Minister Begin announced that the strategic agreement had been cancelled.

B.   The Fifth Habib Mission

Habib returned to the Middle East on February 26, 1982, going to Lebanon,
Syria, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt before returning to Washington
on March 9. Arab leaders said Habib did not propose any new plans for the
missiles, but concentrated on extending the cease-fire. The Israelis claimed

the cease-fire included attacks against Israeli positions launched from Jordan, Syria, or other areas. The PLO said their understanding of the cease-fire applied only to southern Lebanon. The situation remained tense in south Lebanon, with most people expecting an Israeli attack against the PLO positions. PLO spokesmen claimed that they had received heavy weapons and would "stand and fight" an Israeli invasion.

In late March-April 1982, the missiles and the Israeli-PLO cease-fire were overshadowed by preparations for the final implementation of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. The United States organized the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) to patrol the Egyptian-Israeli border following the April 25 Israeli withdrawal from Sinai.

Tensions increased in early May 1982, when several villages in northern Israel were shelled and Israeli planes conducted limited operations in southern Lebanon. Israel began massing troops along the Lebanese border. In a May 14 newspaper interview, Israeli Chief of Staff Eytan stated, "It is a fact that there is no cease-fire." On May 19, a State Department spokesman said there was no plan to send mediator Habib to the region. The same day Prime Minister Begin narrowly won a confidence motion in the Knesset. The Israeli government appeared reluctant to launch a major attack on Lebanon that could result in high Israeli casualties. Yet Israeli defense authorities continued to allude to the necessity of using force against the Palestinians.
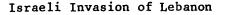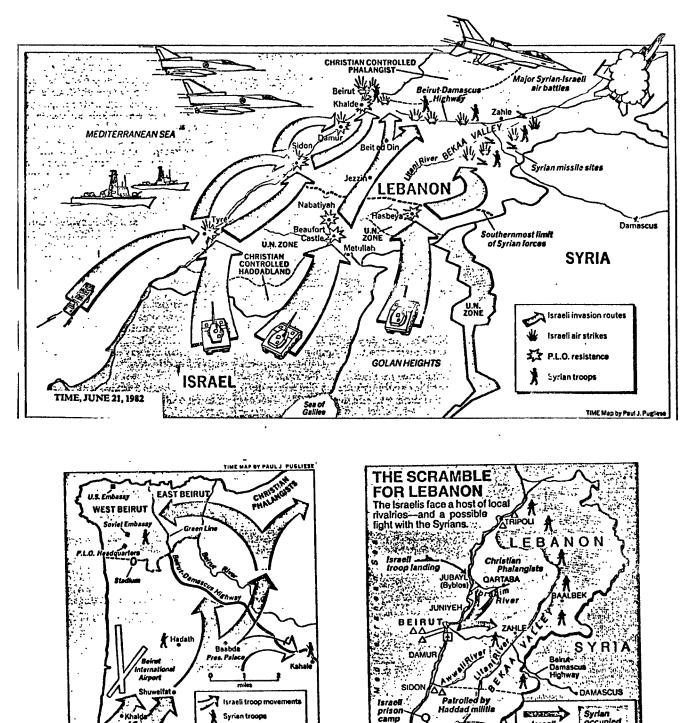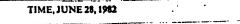
IV. THE ISRAELI INVASION OF LEBANON

On June 3, 1982, the Israeli Ambassador to the United Kingdom was wounded by gunfire in London, a "terrorist" act which the Israelis said violated the July 24, 1981 cease-fire in Lebanon. On June 4, the Israelis began bombing and shelling Palestinian positions in south Lebanon in retaliation for the assassination attempt. When Palestinians answered the Israelis with rocket and artillery fire, an Israeli official said the cease-fire was "null and void." On June 6, 20,000-30,000 Israeli troops and 200 tanks and armored personnel carriers crossed the Lebanon border in a 3-pronged invasion. By June 7, Israeli forces had moved up the coast road to Tyre, seized the towns of Nabatiyah and Hasbaya along the south-central mountain ridge, taken the PLO stronghold at Beaufort Castle, and had landed a force north of Sidon. On June 9, Israeli planes attacked and destroyed 19 Syrian surface-to-air missile sites in the Bekaa valley, the cause of the 1981 missile crisis, and 10 missile sites in Syria. The Israelis did not lose a plane. Over the next 2 days, Israeli planes shot down some 80 Syrian aircraft. A June 11 cease-fire, arranged by U.S. envoy Philip Habib, broke down the next day. By June 14, Israeli forces had reached the outskirts of Beirut along the coast road and had turned east to join with Lebanese Phalangist troops in East Beirut and along the Beirut-Damascus road. Habib arranged another truce on June 18, which held for two days before Israeli troops seized the Beirut airport. Another truce on June 20 was broken on June 23 by artillery and rocket

Map 3

Israeli Invasion of Lebanon

TIME, JUNE 21, 1982

TIME, JUNE 28, 1982
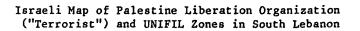

NEWSWEEK/AUGUST 23, 1982

exchange between the PLO-Syrian forces trapped in west Beirut and the Israeli-Phalangist forces surrounding the city. A Habib-arranged cease-fire on June 25 held until early July.
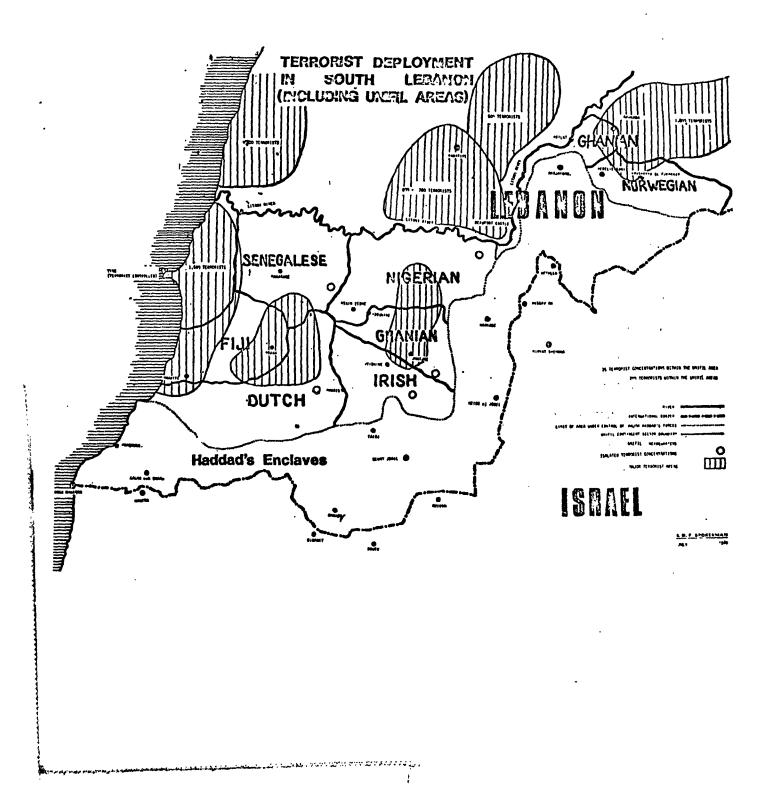
Fighting erupted again on July 4-5, to be stopped by a July 5 cease-fire, but to begin again on July 6. Over the next week, the fighting spread beyond west Beirut into the eastern part of the city and along the Beirut-Damascus highway. Another cease-fire was arranged on July 11, but was broken on July 21 around the Beirut airport. On July 20, the Israelis said the Syrians were trying to move more missiles into the Bekaa valley; Israeli planes destroyed the missile sites on July 22, the same day another truce went into effect. Heavy fighting on July 27 was followed by another cease-fire on July 28, followed in turn by renewed fighting and a cease-fire on August 1. On August 3, Israeli tanks entered west Beirut but withdrew on August 4 in the midst of an artillery exchange. PLO-Syrian forces also clashed with Israeli-Phalangist forces in east Beirut, along the Beirut-Damascus highway, and in the Bekaa valley. On August 10, Israeli planes hit more Syrian missile emplacements in the Bekaa. The next day, Israeli gunners shelled west Beirut for 14 hours before accepting a cease fire on August 12, the 11th since June 11. Aside from some sniping and minor exchanges, the main thrust of the fighting in south Lebanon and west Beirut was over.

A. Israel's Perspective

Israel's stated reasons for invading Lebanon were to stop PLO shelling of northern Israeli cities and to destroy the PLO infrastructure in Lebanon. Israel claimed the PLO was converting its guerrilla force into a conventional

Map 4

Israeli Map of Palestine Liberation Organization
("Terrorist") and UNIFIL Zones in South Lebanon

army by reorganizing the units and adding heavy weapons -- tanks, artillery, rockets, etc. When the invasion began, the Israelis said they would clear the PLO from an area 40-45 kilometers (25 miles) deep, out of artillery range, and that they had no intention of engaging the Syrian forces in the Bekaa valley. During the first few days of the invasion, Israelis said Syrian and PLO attacks forced the Israeli troops to go beyond their 25 mile goal in pursuit of the Arabs.

In Israel, there was speculation that Defense Minister Sharon ignored the cabinet-set 25 mile limit and sent the IDF to Beirut, or that Sharon wanted to engage the Syrians in order to justify sending his forces toward Damascus. Others speculated that Prime Minister Begin received an "approval" from Secretary of State Haig to create the 25 mile buffer zone, but "tricked" the United States by sending the IDF to Beirut. Supposedly, Begin's real purpose was to defeat the leftist forces in Lebanon and to establish a Phalangist government, or to "trade" a withdrawal from Lebanon for Israeli annexation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Israel claimed that its actions in Lebanon:

-- guaranteed the safety of northern Israel;

-- destroyed the PLO politically and militarily;

-- ended PLO intimidation of West Bank/Gaza Arabs, who were then free to enter the Camp David negotiations;

-- would rid Lebanon of foreign forces, Syria and the PLO, which in turn would allow the Lebanese government to re-establish its authority;

-- destroyed the world's primary center for terrorist training; and

-- diminished Soviet prestige by defeating two Soviet clients, Syria and the PLO.

Israeli leaders said Israeli forces would withdraw from Lebanon after Syrian and PLO forces withdrew, after a multinational force was created and emplaced in southern Lebanon to ensure that the PLO did not return to the area, and after the Lebanese government, under its new president (Bashir Jumayyil was elected on August 23 to take office September 23), re-established its authority in the country.

B.   Lebanon's Perspective

The delicate balance among Lebanese political factions produced a consensus that allowed the central government to function on behalf of all of Lebanon; the real power rested not in the central government but with the political leaders who cooperated within the government framework. The political cooperation that produced the consensus collapsed in the 1975-1976 civil war. The National Assembly continued to meet, but could not act because the factions would not allow it to act. The president and the cabinet continued in office, but real leadership rested with faction leaders. The army and police maintained a token presence, but police duties were usurped by the faction militias. Lebanon, the nation, became a helpless bystander, watching Lebanese political factions (Phalange, National Bloc, Lebanese Front, National Front, etc.) and outsiders (Syria, Israel, and the PLO) vie with one another for control of the country. Israel, Haddad's forces, and the Phalange were aligned against Syria, the PLO, and the National Front, with the Phalange the pre-eminate political power in Lebanon.

There was little the Lebanese government could do to stop the Israeli invasion of June 6, other than complain to the United Nations, ask the United States and France to use their good offices to negotiate a cease-fire and withdrawal, and seek assistance to rebuild the Lebanese army toward the day when the fighting stopped. Once the invasion was launched, the Lebanese government coordinated humanitarian relief efforts for the war's victims.

The Lebanese National Assembly met on August 23 to elect a President, Bashir Jumayyil, the Commander-in-Chief of the Lebanese Forces, the Phalange-dominated right-wing militia which had an "alliance" with Israel. Jumayyil's election combined the real power of the Phalange and the Lebanese Forces with the symbolic office of the presidency. Some feared that Jumayyil and the Phalange would use the presidency to punish rival political factions or to partition Lebanon into an Israeli-supported Christian state and a Syrian-supported Muslim state. But, others hoped that Jumayyil would keep his promise to disarm the militias and re-establish Lebanon's army, and would seize on the planned PLO evacuation from Beirut as a first step to rid Lebanon of the other two outside powers, Syria and Israel. The United States, France, and Italy responded to Lebanon's request for assistance in the evacuation, and the United States was negotiating cease-fire and withdrawal of foreign forces. Lebanon's impotence in June had turned into hopeful expectation at the end of August.

C.   Palestine Liberation Organization Perspectives

The PLO claimed that it was operating in Lebanon according to a November 1969 agreement signed in Cairo, and that it was not interfering in Lebanese internal affairs. The PLO said it did not break the July 1981 cease-fire with Israel, which, according to the PLO, did not apply to events outside of Lebanon, and that it was not involved in the assassination attempt on the Israeli ambassador in London. PLO soldiers were defending themselves against the Israeli artillery and air attacks that began on June 4, 1982. The PLO claimed "victory" in southern Lebanon and in the siege of Beirut because its outnumbered and outgunned forces stood against the Israelis for 79 days, longer than other Arab military forces had been able to do. The evacuation from Beirut, in the PLO view, was not a retreat but part of an arrangement that also would lead to the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon.

PLO claims notwithstanding, it was evident that the PLO suffered a military defeat in southern Lebanon, losing its base of operations, its heavy weapons, and its organizational cohesion. Israeli officials professed surprise at the large quantities of artillery, tanks, trucks, rocket launchers, and ammunition captured by the IDF, quantities in excess of pre-invasion estimates by Israeli intelligence sources. The Israelis ended the PLO conversion from a guerrilla to a conventional army, and the evacuation from Beirut scattered PLO elements over eight countries.

It is less clear that the PLO suffered a political defeat in south Lebanon. The Israeli military defeat produced a political humiliation in the form of another Arab loss to the Israelis. And, the PLO witnessed a political setback among its Arab brothers; no Arab states rushed to the aid of the PLO,

and, in fact, several hesitated to accept PLO evacuees from Beirut. Syria's lack of support and refusal to accept evacuees increased an already existing rift between PLO head Arafat and Syrian President al-Assad, and may have contributed to a rift within the PLO itself. It was suggested that the Israeli invasion strengthened the PLO moderates by eliminating the military solution (at least for the short-term) and resolving an internal PLO argument between those who favored "armed struggle" and those who favored political action to secure a Palestinian homeland. One of Arafat's evacuation conditions was a renewed appeal for recognition by the United States, which suggested a willingness to negotiate rather than a willingness to rely on military strength. The PLO derived a minor political benefit in the form of world sympathy generated by the loss of life and devastation in south Lebanon.

D.   The Evacuation of West Beirut

In early June, PLO and Syrian forces fled northward ahead of the rapidly advancing Israeli forces, some to the Bekaa valley and Syrian protection, and others to the PLO stronghold in west Beirut. Those in Beirut (early estimates were 6,000, later raised to 12,000) were trapped, caught between the Phalange along the Beirut-Damascus highway and east Beirut and the Israelis moving up the coast. By June 14, when Israeli troops surrounded the Beirut airport south of the city, it became apparent that a battle between the PLO-Syrians and the Phalange-Israelis would destroy Beirut and jeopardize the 500,000 civilians in the city. In addition to arranging cease-fires to stop the

fighting, Ambassador Habib began negotiating for a PLO-Syrian evacuation from west Beirut that would avoid the anticipated bloody house-to-house battle and save the civilians and the city.

Israel accepted the proposed evacuation to avoid high Israeli casualties expected from an assault on the city. Israeli leaders said the Lebanese army was responsible for clearing the PLO and Syrians out of Beirut, and there was speculation that the Israelis were encouraging their Phalangist allies to attack west Beirut. Israel set conditions for the evacuation:

(1) that the PLO return an Israeli pilot captured in June and the bodies of nine Israeli soldiers;

(2) that the PLO provide a list of all members evacuated from Beirut;

(3) that the PLO leave prior to the arrival of any observers or multi-national force created to oversee the evacuation and policing of Beirut;

(4) that the PLO turn over all its weapons to the Lebanese army prior to evacuation; and

(5) that the PLO agree not to maintain a presence or headquarters in Beirut.

The Israelis conceded that the PLO members could keep their individual weapons, but that heavy weapons, artillery, tanks, trucks, etc. would be collected by the Lebanese army. The Israelis also agreed that the multi-national force could enter Beirut before the evacuation was completed. The other Israeli conditions were met.

PLO leader Yasir Arafat agreed to evacuate Beirut on July 3, but also set conditions:

(1) that the Israelis withdraw at least five kilometers from Beirut before the evacuation;

(2) that the PLO take all weapons and families with them;

(3) that the United States guarantee safe passage of the PLO from Beirut;

(4) that there would be no recriminations against Palestinians left behind in west Beirut after the PLO left; and

(5) that the United States recognize the PLO.

The United States, France, and Italy, as members of the multinational force sent to Beirut to oversee the evacuation, gave the PLO a safe passage guarantee, and, according to the PLO, also promised that there would be no recriminations against Palestinians after the withdrawal. The PLO were allowed to keep their individual weapons. The other PLO conditions were not met.

Lebanon agreed to send 3,000 troops into west Beirut to oversee the evacuation, providing a multinational force assisted the Lebanese army. The Lebanese army collected the PLO heavy weapons, although the Israelis claimed most of the weapons were given to the Muribitun, the Lebanese Shia Muslim militia. At dawn on August 21, 800 French paratroopers arrived in Beirut and the evacuation began, while 800 U.S. Marines from the Mediterranean 6th Fleet and 400 Italian soldiers from the Bersgalieri battalion arrived on August 25. By September 1, a total of 12,000 PLO and 2,700 Syrian soldiers had left Beirut for the following locations:

Jordan	265	Palestine Liberation Army
Iraq	130	Arab Liberation Front
Tunisia	1,000	mixed
South Yemen	700	mixed
Syria	8,200	Saiqa, PLA, others mixed
Sudan	490	al-Fatah
Algeria	590	al-Fatah
North Yemen	450	al-Fatah
Lebanon (Bekaa valley)	2,700	Syrian army

The remainder, mostly wounded, went to Greece and Cyprus, to be transferred to Tunisia at a later date. George Habash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; Nayif Hawatamah, head of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine; and Ahmad Jabril, Chief of the PFLP-General Command, went to Damascus; Yasir Arafat, head of al-Fatah, went to Greece. U.S. troops withdrew from Beirut on September 11, the Italian troops left on September 12, and the French troops departed on the morning of September 14.

E.   Casualties

Lebanese officials estimated that between 10,000 and 12,000 civilian Lebanese and Palestinians were killed, and 20,000 to 30,000 were wounded in the period from June through August 1982. Israeli officials said the Lebanese figures were exaggerated, that only about 500 civilians were killed. Both sides estimated that 2,000 to 3,000 PLO and 2,000 to 3,000 Syrian soldiers were killed in addition to the civilian casualties. Israeli sources said the IDF lost 332 killed, 2,011 wounded, 11 missing in action, and 4 captured from June 4 through August 20.

Israel claimed about 20,000 people were made homeless in south Lebanon, but the figure was based only on reports from those areas under Israeli occupation and did not include people who fled to other areas. The International Committee of the Red Cross estimated that 600,000 people were displaced by the war, although some of those people returned to their homes when the fighting subsided. United Nations sources said between 175,000 and 200,000 people were in need of assistance -- food, clothing, shelter, and medical attention -- because of the war.

Palestinian sources said Israel detained between 7,000 and 9,000 Palestinian and Lebanese men suspected of being members of the PLO or the Syrian army. The Israelis said they held 7,000 men, but that many were released once their identities were established.

REFERENCES

Information for Issue Brief 81090, Lebanon: Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation, and for this study was gathered daily from a variety of sources, among them the following list of periodicals:

Christian Science Monitor

Department of State Bulletin and press releases

Focus (newsletter of the the National Association of Arab Americans)

Foreign Broadcase Information Service, Daily Report, The Middle East and Africa

The Jerusalem Post

Journal of Palestine Studies

Lebanon News (newsletter of the Lebanese Information and Research Center)

The London Times

The Los Angeles Times

Mideast Observer

Middle East

Middle East Economic Digest

Middle East Policy Survey

Middle East Journal

Near East Report (newsletter of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee)

New Outlook

New York Times

Washington Post

Washington Report on Middle Eastern Affairs

Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents