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Highlights

GEOPOLITICS AND STRATEGIC SECTORS

- **The Future Of Lebanon: An Interrogation**

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GEOPOLITCS AND STRATEGIC SECTORS

ANALYSIS 1

The Future Of Lebanon: An Interrogation¹

Authors: Antonio dos Santos² and Gabriela Paulucci da Hora Viana³

This analysis aims to present a geopolitical and historical retrospective of the Lebanese State, focusing on the evolution of instability, without the pretense of exhausting the subject. It also seeks to describe Brazil's relations with Lebanon, especially the process of migration to Brazilian lands and the importance of Brazil's participation in the stabilization process. Finally, general considerations will be presented regarding the political evolution of Lebanon and its conditioning factors, to improve the perception of this unique Country. Methodologically, the research is characterized as exploratory, through a qualitative approach with a bibliographic analysis of articles, books, and Lebanese legislation.

The resignation of Lebanese Prime Minister Mustapha Adib was recently announced on September 26. Since the explosion in Beirut on August 4, the Lebanese government has suffered enormous pressure from the population, which demands measures against those responsible for the explosion and solutions to the crisis installed in the Country - one of the reasons for the resignation would be the involvement of the [armed Shiite movement Hezbollah](#). On the other hand, pressure from other party leaders to occupy the Finance Ministry to compose the government would be another reason. These demands were refused by the other parties and by former Sunni Prime Minister Saad Hariri, making it impossible to compose the new government.

On August 10, Lebanon's Prime Minister Hassan Diab announced the resignation of his government en bloc after nine months in office. On that occasion, he expressed himself as follows: "Today we are taking a step back to stand by the side of the people". Most Lebanese citizens consider this catastrophe to be the result of negligence and neglect of the Country's institutional networks. The long economic deterioration, the recent steep decline of the Lebanese, and inflation that is close to 60% have ended up deepening the political and social tensions in which Lebanon is immersed. This process of composition of the new government results from the initiative of French President Emmanuel Macron, who visited the Country and offered to stitch together a conciliation front because of Lebanon's deep ties with its former metropolis.

Some clarifications are still pertinent in order to have a better notion of the serious Lebanese moment: What is the current situation in Lebanon and how is this country characterized? What will be its future? How is the instability getting worse and what are the geopolitical conditions of this process? This work will be carried out with the aim of "broadening" the knowledge on the issue at hand.

Lebanon is located in the Middle East, the region that connects the Asian, African and European "worlds", being the cradle of four religions. The existence of oil and gas in the region has attracted the interest of large energy conglomerates and central powers, which defend their interests, often without taking into account those of the local inhabitants. Within this scenario of intense disputes, a multi-ethnic country, with restricted living space flourishes

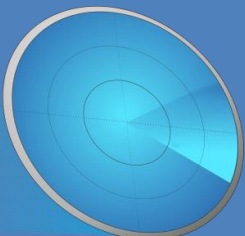
¹ The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Brazilian War College and/or the Ministry of Defense of Brazil

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A photo shows the scenario of an explosion in Beirut, Lebanon



Source: Foreign Policy

Known as the country of cedars, Lebanon is an Arab Nation whose name means white, the meaning of the Semitic language. It borders Israel and Syria and is bathed in a narrow coastal strip by the Mediterranean Sea. Open to Western influences, for a long time it was the favorite tourist destination of Europeans. "In the past, Lebanon was called the Switzerland of the Middle East, land of mountains, money and many cultures, somehow miraculous, managed to live together in harmony. At least that was the postcard view" (FRIEDMAN, 1991, p.20). Originally from the former Phoenicia, it has always played an important role in regional trade because of its geographical location on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea - this location has become a threat to the country's stability due to the pressures exerted by neighboring countries and by extra-regional powers. Below we will transcribe an excerpt of a work that confirms this prominent position of the Beirut trade:

Nowhere else in the Middle East was economic growth more vigorous than in Lebanon, and especially in Beirut - which although administratively separated, had strong links with Mount Lebanon. The city's integration into the world market through commerce, transportation, communications and finance was complete. With the growing movement of its port, Beirut, which had 6,000 inhabitants in 1800, rose to 60,000 in 1860 and 150,000 in 1914 (GATTAZ, 2012, p. 22).

Considered a buffer state, its territory was the target of numerous and intense disputes, being invaded by Persians, Egyptians and suffering strong Muslim influence when dominated by Arabs. Also, when it became a Roman province it was marked by Christian customs. It was the domain of the Turkotomans, together with Palestine, for more than four hundred years. In 1916, under the Sykes-Picot Agreement, in which Russia, Great Britain and France divided the Ottoman Empire, after their defeat in the First World War, Palestine and Lebanon were separated, becoming English and French mandates, respectively. At the time, Syria and Lebanon constituted a single country.

In 1920, France created the Great Lebanon State, which brought together Mount Lebanon and the regions of Beirut: Tripoli, Sidon, Tyre, Akkar, and the Beka Valley. As seen in the transcription below:

⁴ ZAHAR, R. León. Líbano, espejo del Medio Oriente: comunidad, confesión y Estado, siglo VII- XXI. México: El Colégio de México. Disponível em: <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv3dnpd>>. Acesso em 11 set 2020.

[Continues]





In 1920 the ancient Sanjac of Lebanon was enlarged three times in its dimensions by the inclusion of the predominantly Arab cities of Beirut, Tripoli and Saida (Sidon); by the expansion in the south to the border of Palestine, with a predominantly Shiite population; and by the annexation of the fertile mixed-population zone of Bica, consisting mainly of Muslims and Orthodox Christians (KIRK, 1967, p. 208).

The most recent foreign influence on the Lebanese is French, which occurred during that power's mandate, between 1920 and 1943, when Lebanese independence took place. The French initiative to create a new country was promoted by Maronite Christians, who wanted to lead the new nation and sought to encourage the French to form a new state. For a long time, settled in the rugged foothills of Great Lebanon, Maronite Christians led the smaller Catholic communities of the region and maintained ties of support with Christians in Western countries. Prosperous, the Maronites became the most relevant community in Mount Lebanon. However, the religious groups of the other cities that were added, especially the Sunni and Shiite Muslims, did not welcome the solution of the French, as they preferred to be part of the Muslim majority of Syria. The goal of unifying the region was to make the future nation economically viable and to reserve a minimum necessary living space. The National Pact of 1942 aimed to reconcile the majority of the population, which was Christian, and the other ethnic segments, meeting the desires of the political and social representativeness of all communities. However, the demographic growth of Muslims and the stabilization of the reduction of the vegetative growth of Christians would shake this political and social balance.

The Lebanese tradition of clearly and legitimately allowing political representation of ethnic and religious minorities is ancient, according to the quote:

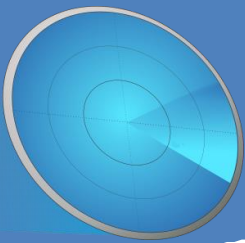
[...] the governor (mutasarrif) would be appointed by the Ottoman sultan with the approval of the European governments, being assisted by an administrative council representing all the religious communities, by government employees and by a police force. Thus, although the region had a clear Christian majority, its political system offered representation and a share of power to minority communities. Under this regulation, which laid the foundation of the country's organization in the system that came to be known as confessional, and enjoying European support, Lebanon lived in relative calm until the first decade of the 20th century, showing considerable socioeconomic progress (GATTAZ, 2012, p. 20).

This unwritten National Pact was built within a context in which the communities sought independence from France and was an element that normalized the rules of political representation of religious communities in public authorities. Moreover, the pact materializes what analysts have decided to call "political confessionalism". During its evolution, Lebanon was the destination of several migrations and the most recent one was the influx of Syrian refugees, due to the civil war in that country. This set of factors eventually influenced the genesis of the constitution of the Lebanese state, in addition to the implementation of a singular pact that would constitute the core of its confessional system. Thus, ethnic minorities were protected and later became population majorities, due to the demographic growth of these ethnicities and also to migration from other regions, attracted by their patricians.

The flow of migrants to Lebanon, as a result of this protection and the vegetative growth of the population, would contribute significantly to unbalancing the measures that made up the National Pact, generating political and social instability in the region. With the war between Arabs and Israelis in 1949, a huge contingent of Palestinians took refuge in Lebanon and, at the end of the war, the Israelis prevented their return, generating a surplus population on Lebanese territory. The demographic factor is extremely relevant in geopolitics, and in Lebanon it was no different, as indicated below:

[Continues]





Changes in the demographic balance were one of these factors. The quantitative expansion of one group generates political, economic and social pressures on other groups and induces reactions to counterbalance them. More importantly, it produces military pressures on the less demographically dynamic groups. The collapse in the early 1970s of the constitutional order that had existed for 30 years in Lebanon was largely the result of the spectacular increase in the Shiite population relative to Maronite Christians (HUNTINGTON, 1998, p. 330).

The Lebanese constituted a parliamentary republic, without official religion, of official Arabic language. However, it cannot be considered a secular state, since its political system is confessional, which means that the most relevant public appointments are conditioned to the service of religious communities. In this way, the state approaches religion, moving away from what would be a traditional secular state. Parliament is represented according to fixed quotas for each religious community: Shiite Muslims are destined to preside over Parliament, Maronite Christians are destined to govern the Republic, while the presidency of the Council of Ministers is reserved for Sunni Muslims. The Lebanese Constitution prescribes religious freedom, and the equality of all citizens before the law⁵. "It is the duty of the state to ensure that the interests and rights of religious communities are respected. This tradition of protecting minorities dates back to the 18th century, when still in the Ottoman Empire the Jewish and Christian minorities had a status that protected them" (GATTAZ, 2012, p.17).

The political instability arising from the Lebanese multi-ethnic system provoked a civil war in 1958 in which Muslims and Catholics were confronted and, as a consequence, a contingent of about 15,000 U.S. troops was sent to Beirut with the aim of stabilizing the country's political situation. This instability was the result of differences between religious or confessional groups as described in the following transcript:

There have long been bouts of fighting between the various confessional groups in the area, and what some historians call the first Lebanese civil war broke out in 1958 between the Maronite Christians and the Muslims, who by this time probably slightly outnumbered the Christians. They are now in a clear majority but there are still no official figures, and academic studies citing numbers are fiercely contested (MARSHAL, 2018, p.154).

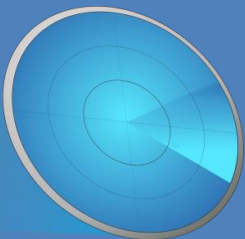
However, because of controversies over changes in the Constitution, the second Lebanese civil war began in 1975, more devastating than the previous one, which would last until 1990. The city of Beirut was divided by the so-called Green Line, but in practice, all Lebanese territory was informally divided. Friedman describes this situation:

Southern Lebanon and the western half of Beirut, which is predominantly Muslim, have become the force base of the PLO and several Lebanese Muslim militias, while the Christian eastern half of the capital and the Christian enclave of Mount Lebanon, to the north and east, have been transformed into the field of action of the Phalangists and their Christian allies. The rest of Lebanon - basically the northern port region of Tripoli and the Beca Valley - fell under Syrian control when Syria dispatched its army to Lebanon in April 1976, apparently to try to end the civil war. The Syrians have remained there ever since (FRIEDMAN, 1991, p. 28, 29).

⁵ <http://www.presidency.gov.lb/English/LebaneseSystem/Documents/Lebanese%20Constitution.pdf>

[Continues]





In this conflict, it became clear the external interference of other countries, such as Israel, which invaded southern Lebanon in 1982, with the argument of defending itself against organized Palestinian militias to attack it. In the Israeli invasion, the Christians allied themselves to the invader with the purpose of expelling the Palestinians to the north of Lebanon. In one of Golda Meir's biographies, the biographer relates Golda's concern with the attacks against Israel from Lebanese territory, which have always been a constant theme in the relationship between the two countries, as we see below:

For three years, terrorist attacks have been repeated in Israel and elsewhere. In the early days of Golda's mandate, Fedayin based in Lebanon and Syria had repeatedly crossed the border to blow up Israeli apartment buildings, throw grenades at markets, fire bazooka shots at school buses, and place explosives in public spaces. When Israel's internal security learned to thwart these attacks, the terrorists turned to Europe, using western European capitals as a base for future operations (BURKETT, 2009, p. 321, 322).

Days after the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon, the United Nations organized a peacekeeping force to contain the violence of the Lebanese civil war. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has been present on Lebanese territory since 1978, and in 2006 its Maritime Task Force was created, which is currently commanded by a Rear Admiral of the Brazilian Navy. UNIFIL has undergone reconfigurations over time in response to subsequent Israeli invasions: in 1984, 1996, the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, and another invasion in 2006. This confirmed serious instability within the Lebanese state, which could spread to neighboring countries.

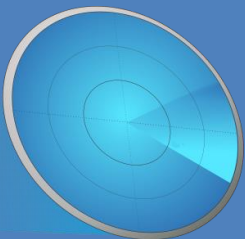
The bombing of Beirut airport in December 1968 and the Cairo agreements in October 1969 are two historic milestones that mark the growth of Lebanon's instability. The Cairo agreements, completed by two annexes in 1973 and 1977, constituted a victory for the Palestinian resistance. This agreement made official the presence and relative autonomy of Palestinians in the southern region of Lebanon, bordering Israel.

The agreement stipulated that only individual weapons could exist inside the camps; that policing would be entrusted to the Palestinians and that the opening of PLO offices outside the camps but with activities restricted to administrative activities was authorized. It was also emphasized that Lebanese sovereignty would be exercised by civil and military authorities, without prejudice to any circumstances.

The agreement signed in Cairo on 25 October 1969 between General Emile Boustani, Commander in Chief of the Lebanese Army, and Yasser Arafat was completed with new clauses after the clashes of September 1970 in Jordan and the expulsion of Fedayin to Lebanon. The clauses cited dealt with the installation of Palestinian bases and the carrying of arms on Lebanese territory. The Cairo agreements would also be added to the Melkart protocol and the Chtaura agreement in Bekaa, the latter already regulating the constitution of the Arab deterrence force, FDA. The Cairo agreements would put the Lebanese government in check with the State of Israel because of the constant incursions by Palestinians against Israel from southern Lebanon. Another variable negatively catalyzed was the relationship between Catholics and Palestinians due to the concessions made to them in that agreement, characterizing the state within the state legally, which displeased the parties involved and partially disfigured the unwritten 1943 treaty. In this way, the damage to the stability of the Lebanese state caused by the Cairo agreement and its additional clauses is proven.

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Another significant event in the Middle East and with considerable weight in Lebanon's strategic environment was the Islamic Revolution, which erupted in 1979 in Iran. The Iranians, long-time allies of the United States, rebelled against their guardians, causing a great regional geopolitical imbalance. The vision of the Iranian leaders turned against the whole West as it reveals Kissinger (2015, p.155):

All political institutions in the Middle East and beyond were "illegitimate" because they were not "based on divine law. Saudi Arabia, also an ally of the Americans, began to dispute the condition of regional power with the Iranians, which required great skill in Western diplomacy. This rivalry affects the oil market and amplifies regional instability as a result of the financial, political, and military support provided by these countries to terrorist groups and internal adversaries of governments of countries in the region that oppose them.

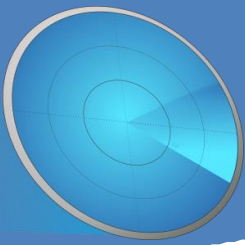
Political map of Lebanon



Source: Nations Online

During the Lebanese civil war, the Sabra and Chatila massacres, perpetrated by the Falangist Militia against Palestinian civil refugees, took place on September 19 and 20, 1982. The fact was classified as genocide by the United Nations (UN) - the massacres were allegedly motivated by the assassination of Lebanon's President-elect and Phalangist leader Bachir Gemayel on September 14, 1982. Gemayel was the leader of an extreme rightwing Lebanese Phalanges organization, and he did not recognize Palestinian refugees as Lebanese citizens. The Palestinians accused him of having secret agreements with Israel and that, by taking office with the support of the neighboring country, he would expel the PLO and the Syrians from Lebanon - this caused his murder by the Muslims.





These massacres would have occurred with the implicit consent of the invading Israeli troops, who were positioned less than a kilometer from the attacked refugee camps - the fact, according to analysts, could have characterized the omission of Israeli military leaders. The camps were located on the southern periphery of Beirut, a region controlled by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The Israeli Defense Minister at the time, Ariel Sharon, was convicted by the Supreme Court of Israel and, as a result, fired from his position.

Still in the context of the Lebanese civil war, there is the expulsion of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) fighters from Lebanon to Tunisia, which had already been negotiated shortly before the assassination of Bachir Gemayel. As had happened in Jordan when King Hussein, after suffering coup attempts led by the Palestinians, decided to expel the PLO from Jordanian territory, the PLO would also be expelled in Lebanon. The situation that is repeating is that the Palestinians are migrating from one country to another, and as they settle, they seek to extend their political and social rights. By allying themselves with local minority groups, and sometimes opposing the established governments, they cause discomfort in the constituted authorities of the countries, resulting in reprisals such as expulsion.

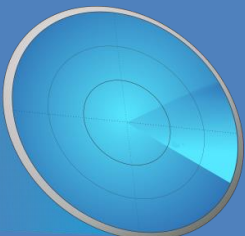
The Taif Accords, signed in 1989, were an important step towards ending the Civil War (1975 and 1990). The agreement divided the seats in the Lebanese Parliament equally between Christian and Muslim groups - this division replaced the previous convention, concluded in the National Pact (1943), in which Christians were represented at 60%, based on a census carried out in the 1930s. It was the negotiations around the National Pact between Shiite, Sunni and Maronite leaders that made possible Lebanon's independence in 1943, breaking ties with France.

The agreements clearly prescribe that the abolition of political confessionalism is an essential national objective that requires, for its realization, a programmed action in stages. The most ambitious objective implied was to bring stability and reconcile Lebanon, yet none of the measures suggested by the Taif Accords were put into practice - except the suppression of religion in identity cards. Thus, political instability continued to grow because of the protagonism of new and old Lebanese domestic political actors.

Lebanon is significantly affected by the actions of terrorist groups. The multi-ethnic structure and constitutional facilities offered by the current political system, as well as the support provided to these groups by neighboring countries, enable these movements to prosper in their territory. The damage caused by the presence of terrorist groups in Lebanon is proven by the transcript below:

But the deepest impact of the Islamic revolution in the Middle East is not felt in Palestine, where it was only a source of inspiration for Jihad, but in neighboring Lebanon. It seems that the country has a particularly favorable situation for exporting the revolution: five years of civil war since 1975 had undermined the authority of the government, unable to play its constitutional role as guarantor and arbitrator of the balance between Christians and Muslims. The occupation of part of the territory by Syria, from June 1976, under the pretext of restoring peace, would gradually lead Lebanon to become a Syrian protectorate (KEPELL, 2003, p.191).





The birth of a "resistance" - from the Shiite side - emerges in the form of combating the Israeli presence in the Lebanese south. Further ahead it became an important armed group, financed by Iran and supported by Syria: the Hezbollah, created in 1982 - also spelled Hizballah. Years later, in 1992, it became a political party without giving up the armed struggle. Today, recognized as a political party, Hezbollah elected the equivalent of 10% of the Lebanese parliament. The withdrawal of the Israeli Defense Forces from Lebanon was considered by military analysts to be a defeat for the Israelis and, through irregular war tactics, Hezbollah was successful in being perceived as responsible for the withdrawal of Israeli defense forces from Lebanese territory, as follows:

Under the spiritual guidance of Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah and the charismatic leadership of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and Imad Fayeze Mugniyah, Hezbollah played a major role in the struggle against the Israeli forces in the south of the country, which began in 1982 - a fact that gave it great prestige throughout the Muslim world. When the Tel Aviv government ordered the withdrawal of its troops in May 2000, the military evacuation that followed was seen as an unprecedented victory for the tenacious resistance driven by Hezbollah. The Party of God achieved, through irregular warfare, what no national army or other militant organization in the Islamic world had been able to achieve until then. For the first time since 1948, the Muslims managed to force the Israelis to give up territory. After the withdrawal of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), Hezbollah did not decline from armed struggle, but restructured itself as a legitimate political party, winning seats in parliament and winning 60% of municipal elections in the south of the country (VISACRO, 2010, p.89).

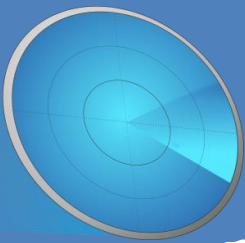
In this way, the group has gained popular support and credibility that reinforces its political projection on Lebanese territory, constituting itself as a state within the state of Lebanon - which requires a complex capacity of the Lebanese to deal with this issue. It is fair to say that a significant part of Lebanese instability stems from the actions of extremist groups, especially Hezbollah.

The group's objectives, announced in a manifesto in 1985, are to destroy the state of Israel and expel Western influences from Lebanon and the Middle East. The Syrian government of Bashar Al-Assad is the biggest supporter of Hezbollah and participated effectively in its foundation and, during the civil war in Syria, the group supports the central government, including sending troops. In addition to its political structure, Hezbollah has an extensive security apparatus and also stands out for providing support to the population through its social services network. Iran provides ostensible support to Hezbollah, which creates more tension in its relationship with Israel-Tehran. It has also offered to sell oil and gasoline to the Lebanese government in Lebanese pounds, thus preserving the Lebanese government from the burden of the gradual devaluation of its currency. On several occasions in the past, the Iranian leaders promised to make it possible to supply Lebanon with electricity if the Lebanese authorities only requested it. Thus, an important external influence on Lebanon materialized, contributing to the growth of Lebanese instability.

Another organization operating in Lebanese territory is the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) - created in 1964 by Yasser Arafat, whose purpose was to fight for the rights of the Palestinian people in the region. Fatah, which was also led by Arafat, is the allied political group of the PLO, acting in a more moderate way than its ally in the region, being active until today in Lebanese territory. The presence of Palestinians in Lebanon dates back to the creation of the state of Israel and the war of independence against the Arabs. On that occasion, around one hundred thousand Palestinians migrated to Lebanon. Israel did not allow them to return because of Lebanon's support for Arab peoples during the conflict.

⁶ SILVA, C. A. Edilson. Oriente Médio: A Gênese das Fronteiras. Porto Alegre: Zouk, 2003.





It is worth noting that the Lebanese did not employ troops against the Israelis in this war and the differences with the PLO led Israel to invade Lebanon, with the aim of expelling the PLO from Lebanese territory in 1982, during the civil war. Israel occupied southern Lebanon for eighteen years and, during that occupation, the Oslo Agreement between Israel and the PLO took place, in which both sides recognized each other. In addition, a Declaration of Principles dealing with progressive Palestinian autonomy and the territories of Gaza and Jericho was signed in Washington.

Brazil has an important relationship with Lebanon. The maintenance of the high level of this relationship was only possible due to the extreme ability of the Brazilian diplomatic corps, which was able to defend national interests in a pragmatic way, avoiding getting involved in regional disputes, which are common in the Middle East. Brazil has a significant percentage of Lebanese and their descendants rooted in its territory - this portion of the population reaches six million, contrasting with the total Lebanese population estimated at 3.8 million people. This aspect is central to the relationship between countries requiring special care. The relations go back to imperial Brazil, when a visit by Don Pedro II to the Middle East took place, as indicated below:

Although diplomatic relations were formally established in 1944, the year following Lebanon's independence, contacts between the two peoples had been at least half a century. It is considered that the symbolic landmark of the inauguration of the relationship was the visit of Dom Pedro II to the Middle East in 1876. Despite the private nature of the tour, the Brazilian emperor's trip through Lebanon (then a province of the Ottoman Empire) caught the attention of the local press, which not only covered the passage of the head of state through Beirut, but also presented the readers with detailed information about Brazil (SCHERER, et al., 2017, p.20).

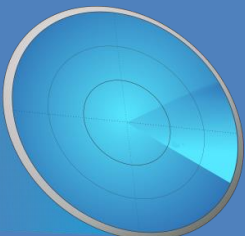
The recent migration process of the Lebanese towards Brazil is related to the precarious political stability of that country. This displacement expanded during the civil war, when a high percentage of Shiite Lebanese moved here, accommodating themselves primarily in the state of Paraná.

When the explosion in Beirut occurred, the Brazilian government immediately mobilized to provide humanitarian support to the Lebanese, despite the strong crisis generated by the Covid-19 pandemic. On August 9, the Brazilian government announced an Aid Mission to Lebanon - an Embraer KC-390 aircraft, of the Brazilian Air Force, was loaded with medicines and basic health supplies for up to 40,000 people for a month, departing from Guarulhos Airport on Lebanese land. The Lebanese community's social contribution to Brazil was highlighted, which earned the Lebanese diplomatic corps registration and demonstrations of gratitude from the Lebanese living in Brazil. The Brazilian mission was headed by former president Michel Temer, descendant of Lebanese, and that has penetration next to the political class and society of that country. The Brazilian support to the Lebanese people has already occurred in other situations, as can be seen in the transcription below:

In the context of the 2006 War, which opposed the State of Israel to the Hezbollah forces stationed in southern Lebanon, Chancellor Celso Amorim visited Beirut in August of that year. On that occasion, a Brazilian Air Force Hercules plane took 9 tons of humanitarian aid, of which 2.7t in medicine donated by the Brazilian government, and supplies collected by the Lebanese community in Brazil through a mobilization campaign (SCHERER, et al., 2017, p.29).

The relationship between populations is intense and complex, surpassing interstate relations that are commercial, diplomatic, and cooperation for development and peacekeeping, as evidenced by the transcription below:





The enormous presence of Lebanese descendants in Brazil makes it impossible to ignore the fraternal ties between our two peoples, since there isn't a single Lebanese family that doesn't have relatives on Brazilian soil". Therefore, no matter how close the two countries have a state relationship of cooperation and constantly developing commercial aspirations, which we hope will flourish very soon, the predominant nature of this relationship is much more fraternal than commercial or political (SCHERER, et al., 2017, p.16).

Due to such a special relationship among peoples, the Brazilian interests in that region and the strategic stature of Brazil, the convenience is glimpsed that Brazil should continue to provide diplomatic and humanitarian support to the friendly country in order to consolidate our friendly relationship and its status as a major participant in international issues, in line with article four of the Brazilian Constitution of 1988.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Lebanon has a political structure based on its multi-ethnic and religious social organization. Its political evolution as a sovereign state is imbued with the destinies of the Middle East and the problems of that region. Power is disputed internally by the ethnic groups that form the Lebanese nation, to which is added the attempt by neighboring countries to influence Lebanese domestic politics motivated by geopolitical issues. The case of Syria, which has already formed a single state along with Lebanon, and Iran, which is trying to reach Israel indirectly from Lebanese territory, are the most striking examples of these external influences.

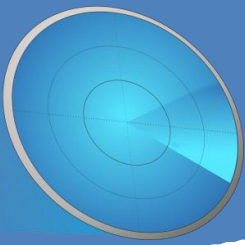
The political, social and economic instability that makes the country stand out is also the result of the consequences of the long Lebanese civil conflict - the scenario of the economic crisis begins with the end of the Lebanese Civil War, where Elias Hrawi's government undertook an economic plan ⁷ that tied the Lebanese pound to the dollar, a fixed exchange rate regime. The economic scenario was further aggravated by the country's great dependence on imports - Lebanon has no significant industrial production: it imports 80% of its needs, including food and fuel. Its economy is based on real estate trading, banking transactions and financial transfers from the Lebanese⁸ diaspora. Banks have offered high interest rates to attract dollar deposits, which bankers then lend to the government. In addition, the country accumulates one of the largest public debts in the world, equivalent to 170% of its GDP.

Lebanese political instability stems from the natural dispute for the exercise of power in a society deeply marked by religious, ethnic and cultural divides. The lack of a set of common civil laws that organize and discipline society as a homogeneous whole, contributes to the structure molding the agent, consolidating geographical regions segregated on the basis of ethnic and religious factors. Thus, the confessional system perpetuates itself, contributing to the weakening of the unique and central governance, making systemic and comprehensive administrative management difficult in the Lebanese state.

⁷ RASCHKA, Marilyn. Reconstructing Lebanon: The Role of President Elias Hrawi. Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, 1993. Disponível em: <<https://www.wrmea.org/1993-june/reconstructing-lebanon-the-role-of-president-elias-hrawi.html>>. Acesso em: 03 set 2020.

⁸ COOK, A. Steven. Lebanon as We Know It Is Dying. Disponível em: <<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/30/lebanon-as-we-know-it-is-dying/>>. Acesso em: 3 set 2020.





The different demographic growth of population groups, organized by ethnicities and religion, as well as the emigration and immigration flows, which add to the 174,000 Palestinian refugees on Lebanese territory, imply varied rates of population increase and decrease, further favoring the amplification of the systemic instability inherent in the Lebanese political system and aggravating social injustices: garbage collection crisis since 2015, electricity supply rotation since the Israeli attack of 2006, and the dizzying drop in drinking water supply⁹.

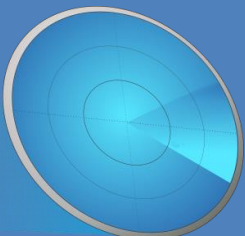
As a consequence of years of dysfunction and corruption, Lebanon's political system has been strongly questioned due to the failure of public policies, aggravating the crisis. Since the end of the civil war, the full extent of the nation's economic problems has reverberated: hyperinflation, large-scale layoffs, drastic restrictions on bank looting, impoverishment of the middle class, and a galloping increase in extreme poverty, the result of the corruption of an unstable political system. Instability has been most strikingly visible since mid-2019, when demonstrations against economic weakness and the influence of the Shiite Hezbollah party in politics began. On the other hand, the Lebanese government continues to dodge reform, approaching Iran, diverging with parliament, resisting IMF assistance and flirting with the Chinese government.

The solution to a complex problem, of countless variables such as Lebanon, will necessarily require a concerted decision with all the ethnic segments present in the country. The proposals must be shielded from outside influence, which has always been present in Lebanese domestic politics as a result of alliances between Lebanon's ethnic groups and their ancestors in other countries. Respect for cultural traditions and the adoption of sovereign measures that consider the legitimate Lebanese interest will naturally result from society's consensual understanding of the debilitation of the current model and the need for change. Lebanon's stability may be able to demonstrate that it is possible for ethnic groups to live together peacefully, constituting the seed of peace in a region characterized by endless conflicts. The Brazilian experience of building a mixed and peculiar nation can be beneficial in this task

⁹ Explosão no Líbano: entenda o antes e o depois do país. Jornal IG. São Paulo, 2020. Disponível em: <<https://ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/mundo/2020-08-11/explosao-no-libano-entenda-o-antes-e-o-depois-do-pais.html>>. Acesso em: 02 set 2020.

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News published by OMNIDEF

Al Jazeera – 12/09/2020

Talks between Afghan government and Taliban open in Qatar

After nearly two decades of war that has killed tens of thousands, peace talks between the Afghanistan government and the Taliban have opened in Qatar's capital. Key speakers at Saturday's opening ceremony at a hotel in Doha included Abdullah Abdullah, chairperson of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation, Taliban deputy leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. The negotiations, where the two warring sides will sit face-to-face for the first time, will start.

For complete news, [CLICK HERE](#)

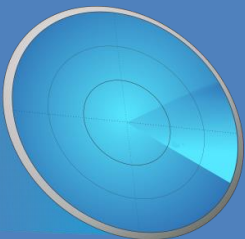
Modern Diplomacy – 19/09/2020

Transition of Balance of Power from Unipolar to Multipolar World Order

The international system may be described as a complex system of social, scientific, political, military and technological systems. This dynamic structure is very difficult to evaluate and it is even more difficult to predict its future. The distribution of power potential in the international system defines the number of major powers and thus the international system's polarity. The system would be multi-polar if the great powers are more than two; if they are two it would be bipolar and systems with only one great power are called unipolar.

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