

LEBANON AND THE SYRIAN CONFLICT 2011-2013

シリア問題とレバノン——2011～2013年

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2011年に発生したアラブ世界での民衆蜂起は、市民としてのアラブ人が近代的で民主的な国家を建設しようとする努力であった。その意味でアラブ民衆蜂起が発生した主な原因はもっぱら国内要因であり、そこに地域的、国際的な介入が加わったのである。

アラブ民衆蜂起はシリアでは内戦に発展し、その影響は現在周辺国にも及んでいる。シリアが内戦に至った要因を理解するためには、シリアとそれを取り巻く現状を理解するだけでなく、シリアという国家が持つ歴史、なかでもフランス委任統治期の分断統治政策の失敗、ハーフィズ・アサドによる独裁体制の構築と継続、イスラエルによる干渉といったシリア現代史の影響を検討することが重要である。

シリア内戦はレバノン、ヨルダン、トルコなどの周辺国にも少なからぬ影響を与えている。シリア難民の流出は、レバノンとヨルダンにとって社会と経済の負荷となっている。またシリア国内の分断と混乱は、レバノンの国内宗派对立をも先鋭化させた。他方でシリア内戦が長期化するにともない、イスラエルによるシリアとレバノンへの干渉が懸念されるようになっている。

シリア内戦およびそれに対するイスラエルの対応は、結果的にレバノンへの大きな圧力となった。今後レバノンが主権国家としての安定的な地位を維持するためには、シリア内戦への政治的な関与を避け、国内各勢力の融和および各勢力の協調による国家運営を進めることがこれまで以上に必要である。

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1. Historical Background of Modern State in Lebanon and Syria

During its long modern history, Lebanon and Syria were a part of Bilad el-Sham. They have many religious communities, ethnic and tribal groups. The Lebanese try to demonstrate that their country has existed since ancient Phoenicia, and they have written about the Lebanese independence and the Lebanese uniqueness since time immemorial.

In the course of history, many conquerors invaded the Lebanese and Syrian territories, but they were obliged to leave it later. The reality of the Lebanese and Syrian peoples is that there are small basic divisions between them in terms of ethnicity. In modern Lebanon and Syria there are nineteen religious sectarian communities, which should not be compared with ethnic groups. Language, culture, customs, music and food are common to all these communities. Socio political divisions certainly exist in Lebanese as in Syrian society, but they are not, as they had been portrayed in the western point of view, equal to independent sectarian or ethnic groups.¹

The European interferences in the Ottoman Empire were the main causes of the sectarian division in order to create the modern states in the former Bilad el-Sham area. Sectarian identity and tribal diversity are still strong components of contemporary Lebanon and Syria.

The new modern state in both countries has preserved the traditional values of the old traditional sectarian and tribal society, and the strong loyalty to the familial leaders in Lebanon and Syria. Their socio economic changes went side by side with the instability of the sectarian political regime in Lebanon and the long stability under the military regime, especially under the longtime period of the Baath Party regime in Syria. The civil war in Lebanon and recently in Syria proved that sectarian feeling is still deeper than the national one in both Lebanese and Syrian minds. The national loyalty was preserved only by a strong modern state under the military control in both countries.

Since its creation as a modern state in Lebanon under the French Mandate, the Lebanese's struggle continues to preserve Lebanon as an independent state not absorbed into a larger Syria or any Arab state. Therefore, Lebanon was a founder member of the Arab League on 1944, and should be related to the Arab world. The National Pact of 1943 represented a sort of national consensus between certain Lebanese political leaders. Its terms included an independent state as a sovereign and neutral Lebanon in which Muslim communities renounced any idea of unity with Syria or any other Arab state. In return it expected Christians renunciation of separation from Arab countries, as well as renunciation of their special ties with France or any other foreign state.

Until now, the two neighboring Arab countries, Lebanon and Syria, did not have clear official demarcating lines through their whole borders. They lived under the same political, economic and military administration of France until 1946, the year of the evacuation of French troupes from the both countries. Some Lebanese and Syrians believe that they are one people in two independent states.²

It is true that they have long intimate social, economic and political ties. Inter-marriage between their citizens is common, and as a result of which families extend

¹My first Ph. D thesis at Sorbonne University in Paris was under the title: "L'Histoire Sociale de l'Etat du Grand Liban 1920-1926." It was developed and published in Arabic under the title: *Tarikh Luban al-ijtima'i (Social History of Lebanon 1914-1926)*, Beirut, 1974 and 1984.

²My second PhD thesis at Sorbonne University in Paris was under the title: "L'Histoire socio-politique de la République Libanaise sous Mandat Français." It was developed and published in Arabic under the title: *Al-Tarikh al-ijtima'ial-iqtisadi li-Jumhouriat al-Lubnan fi ahd al-intidab al-Faransi 1926-1946 (Socio-economic History of the Lebanese Republic under the French Mandate 1926-1946)*, Beirut, 1977 and 1984.

across the borders. The economy in both countries is closely complementary and interdependent. Lebanon was very close to Syria in both economic and social fields. But the political sectarian regime in Lebanon is completely different from the Syrian Arab Nationalist and military Baath regime.

Due to the military coups in Syria, the Lebanese free market economic system has attracted Syrian capital and workers. The Syrian military regime was stronger and more stable than the Lebanese sectarian regime, which led to a very weak and unstable state. The long period of the Baath party regime in Syria was a fundamental cause that brought about the instability of the Syrian regime.

The instability of Lebanon was related to the internal division of its multi-sectarian society. It was also largely influenced by the free co-existence between the modern culture and the political loyalty to the religious and ethnic groups. Consequently, Lebanon experienced many challenges between the Lebanese modern state and the sectarian-familial ties within the whole Lebanese communities. In addition, the Lebanese sectarian regime faced many long civil wars in the Mont-Lebanon from the nineteenth century to the Greater and independent Lebanon of the twentieth century. The multi religious society has been the cause of much regional interference in Lebanon.

The sharp internal division of the Lebanese state and society was the main reason of the long civil war of 1975-1989. It was a good opportunity for Syria and Israel to control or occupy the whole Lebanese territory. The heavy military presence of 35,000 Syrian soldiers in Lebanon from 1976 -2005 gave the Syrian regime its “golden time” to control political and economic life in Lebanon.³

Syria’s hegemony lasted three decades and faced a serious resistance, especially in the Christian area, and became very strong after the assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq el-Hariri, on February 14, 2005. The Syrian regime was directly accused of this assassination, and its army left Lebanon. However, the long period of the Syrian presence in Lebanon has left many supporters in this country, especially the Hezbollah Party, and many other parties and political organizations. In addition, there were the Syrian wars against Israel and the loss of Golan Heights, the long Syrian interference in Lebanon 1976 -2005, the corruption of the military and political elite in Syria, and regional interferences in Syria after the beginning of the Syrian uprising in 2011.

2. The Syrian Uprising 2011: Facts and Perspectives

During a very short time in 2011, some Arab countries experienced the rapid collapse of despotic leaders (Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen). After a few days, Western countries interfered and diffused the concepts of “The Arab Spring” proposed by the U.S. President Obama and “The Constructive Chaos Theory” of Western contemporary thought.⁴

As a result, two Islamic regimes governed in Tunisia and Egypt. After one year of the Ikhwan regime, Egypt experienced a bloody confrontation between The Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian army. Since June 30, 2013, Egypt has had a newly oriented political system. One should ask: what will be the future of the Islamist governments in the other Arab Uprisings, the role of military Islamic organizations after their confrontation with the national army, and the institutions of the modern Arab states and their nearly secular constitutions?

³Massoud Daher, “The Socio-economic Changes And the Civil War in Lebanon” (V.R.F. Series, No.201), Institute of Developing Economies, Tokyo, March 1992.

⁴Gerard Gallucci, “There never was an ‘Arab Spring’”, *Trans Conflict*, August 26, 2013.

The Syrian uprising started with largely peaceful protests on March 2011. After a very short time it moved into a full-blown civil war with increasingly sectarian confrontations. Immediately, Syria was shocked by a long civil war. The main causes of the Syrian Uprising could be enumerated thus: The lack of democracy in the Syrian despotic regime, the political monopoly of the Baath Party for more than forty years, the corrupt administration, and the loss of the Golan Heights after a military confrontation with the Israeli army.

The peaceful Syrian uprising was supported by a large Syrian population. Many contradictions were shown among the Syrian military rebels largely supported by “The Friends of the Syrian People”. The Arab League played a very negative role, which was coupled with significant oil money from the Arab Gulf States in order to breakdown the Syrian regime.

The sectarian approach to the recent Syrian crisis was influenced by the policy of the French Mandate between the two World Wars. France divided the Syrian territory into four mini states of Damascus, Aleppo, Djebel Druze and Lattakieh. The province of Iskandaroun was annexed to Turkey few years before the beginning of the World War II. Syrians fought hard against the partition of their lands, and obliged the French army to leave Syria and to create The Independent Syrian Arab Republic on 1946.

“At independence, Syria lacked an exclusive central authority that could serve as a focus of identity and loyalty for the whole population; instead Syria was a geographical expression with no unified political identity or community”.⁵

Historically, the recent Syrian crisis is not related only to the sectarian communities and political regime in Syria. The Middle East of today is largely influenced by the Zionist dream to create the Greater Israel between Euphrates and Nile. An additional plan, The Greater Middle East Plan, came to support the last one. Consequently, this Sectarian approach to divide Syria again into many small sectarian states was not viable. It is also not convenient to describe the real causes of the Syrian crisis in very complicated interferences of internal, regional and international factors. “To understand the current violence in Syria, one has to think about the nature of the violence against the population in the four preceding decades. Violence has been an essential tool of Ba’thist rule, mostly under Assad family. Since the ascendancy of the Ba’th party in 1963, Syria has been under emergency rule which suspends all rights and liberties”.⁶

After two and a half years, the Syrian rebels did not have one executive legal committee. Many foreign rebels came to Syria in order to fight against the Syrian regime. They killed a lot of innocent Syrian peoples greater than the number of casualties from the Syrian military.

On the other hand, there are many reasons for Turkish interferences in Syria. The Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan and his collaborators had a dream of a new Ottoman Islamic League or Ottoman Commonwealth. The Syrian president criticized Erdogan for reconciling with Israel after three years of frosty relations, and accused the Turkish leaders of “working in coalition with Israel to strike against Syria”.

Saudi Arabia and Qatar collaborated with Turkey to remove the Syrian President, Bashar el-Assad, in order to create an Islamic State in Syria. The Syrian territories were opened to more than 30,000 Islamic fundamentalists who came from nearly 40 countries to fight against what they believe to be an anti-Islamic Syrian regime.

“As a result of the militarization, the regime made its own survival the only guarantee of regional stability...With the militarization of the Syrian crisis, the opposing

⁵Housam Darwisheh, “Deciphering Syria’s power dynamics and protracted conflict”, Hitoshi Suzuki (ed.), *The Middle East Turmoil and Japanese Response*, IDE-JETRO, 2013, p.168.

⁶Ibid, p.185.

forces will hardly understand the language of political transition to democracy in the years to come... The opposition has so far failed to unite around a political program for post-Assad Syria".⁷

The question is: Why did the Syrian uprising begin peacefully over more than six months, before its direction was oriented by Salafists, Muslim Brothers, Nusra, Islamic State of Sham and Iraq, and about ten other Islamic groups?

One should remember that the diplomatic effort to halt the violence in Syria was shadowed by the western intervention in the Libyan conflict, which resulted in a six-month-long military operation to topple President Gaddafi. So the U.N. Security Council did not stop the violence in Syria and the debate on the whole Middle East area was stopped. The Syrian president, Bashar Assad, warned of a Middle East "domino effect" because the fall of his regime would fuel instability in neighboring countries for many years. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon asserted that what started as a peaceful, popular call for long-denied democratic rights has turned into a dangerous spiral of violence, leading both Syria and the whole region into uncertainty. He blamed the Assad regime for its disproportionate use of force against its people in shameful operations.

However, the Syrian regime did not collapse. From the beginning of the Syrian crisis, Russia has been the strongest ally of the Syrian regime. It was followed by China. Both of these powers shielded the Syrian regime from U.N. sanctions. Russia and China had also signaled that it was not a problem to retain Assad in power.

They wanted not to support President Assad but to safeguard the unity of Syrian society and State. Russia and China refused to back appeals for Assad to step down and pushed for talks with the opposition. Putin said "What is going on in Syria is a massacre; this is a disaster, a catastrophe. It has to be stopped. When they say that Assad is fighting against his own people, we need to remember that this is against the armed part of the opposition".

Consequently, negotiations between the Syrian government and the opposition are necessary to provide guarantees to all parties and prevent the country from sliding into turmoil. It is necessary to bring every Syrian group to the negotiation table in order to reach an agreement that can protect the unity of Syrian territories, and to give the Syrians good governance for a really, truly democratic state.

On October 2, 2013, according to media reports, more than 135,000 people were estimated to have been killed in more than two and half years of civil war in Syria, with four million refugees both inside Syria and in neighboring countries. Newly developed weapons from the United States have materialized, since the White House announced that it had authorized direct military support for the Syrian rebels. Western arms deliveries, made through the rebels' Supreme Military Council, aims to help shift the balance of power in Syria away from increasingly influential Islamist groups that already possess anti-tank weaponry.

In conclusion, after two and half years of war in Syria, the Syrian regime is still strong and even stronger than a few months ago. The continuity of the President Assad as the head of the Syrian state has become a controversial problem between Russia and the anti-Syrian regime. The unity of the Syria and its national army as well as the unity of the diplomatic corps are still strong. The Victory in Qusair city at the beginning of 2013 opened the door to the Syrian army to weaken the military rebels. In addition, the Syrian rebels like The Islamist Group of Al-Nusra, the Al-Qaida Group, the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq, the Syrian Alliance, the pro-Turkey Group, The Movement for the Kurds Auto-determination in Syria, and many others, are fighting each other in many Syrian lands.

⁷Ibid, pp.187-188.

3. The fear of an Israeli confrontation against Syria and Lebanon

After the government's military achievements in Qussair and Homs, there has been some tactical regrouping by the opposition. Both sides are preparing for a major round of fighting in Aleppo, Daraa and Idlib. Despite the regime's victory at Qussair, the fighting continues in the whole Syrian territories. Rabinovich analyzed the current situation of the war in Syria in mid-August 2013 as following:

“Two principal schools of thought in the policy debate on Syria: One school regards Syria primarily as a theater of battle against al-Qaida and other extremists. Its adherents, preoccupied with the prospect of a jihadi takeover in Syria, argue that the U.S. and its allies must not support or intervene on the side of the rebels and, in fact, should view Bashar Assad's regime as the lesser evil. The other school of thought does not take this scenario lightly. Nonetheless, it argues that a victory in Syria by a coalition of Russia, Iran, Hezbollah, and Assad's regime would pose an even greater danger. Moreover, in the event of the Assad regime's fall, there would be plenty of ways to deal with the jihadi groups in Syria”. He concludes “Yes, Syria's secular opposition is weak and divided, while the jihad is more dynamic; but jihadi supremacy in the event of an opposition victory is not inevitable. The U.S. and its allies should conduct a robust policy; make a more significant investment in the secular opposition, and articulate clear goals”.⁸

In fact, the Israeli strike near Latakia on July 5, 2013, was the fourth known airstrike in Syria by Israel this year. Israel maintains it has not been involved in the Syria crisis during the two years of the civil war except to stop weapons transfers. It implies it will hit Syria if Russia delivers long-range anti-aircraft missiles to Syria .. The S-300 missiles are a threat to Israel and can reach aircraft over Ben Gurion Airport. On the other hand, the occupied Golan Heights could be a reason for a new confrontation between Syria and Israel. The Syrian rebels in Golan are worried that Israel has a well-prepared plan to animate and support a long civil war in Syria and Lebanon. Israel believes in a military solution to the Middle East conflict. It is still occupying the Syrian Golan Heights, and there have been many military confrontations between Syria and Israel over Lebanese territories.

Israel is still ready to declare war against Lebanon for many reasons. The main causes are:(1) The dream of the Jewish State in Greater Israel, enclosing Lebanon and Syria,(2) the existing Israeli plan to destroy Hezbollah forces, (3) the Israeli aim to revenge the victory of the Lebanese National Movement of Liberation against Israeli Occupation that largely damaged the image of the unbeatable Israeli Army, (4) the huge missiles in the hands of Hezbollah militants, and (5) the Israeli plan to destroy the military forces of the allies of Iran, c.

Some additional Israeli regional reasons could be mentioned here, especially, the impact of the American policy to create the Greater Middle East, the failure of negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis, and the great danger of an Iranian atomic bomb.

⁸Itamar Rabinovich, “Defusing Syria's ticking time bomb”, *The Japan Times*, August 14, 2013.

Needless to say Lebanon is largely divided in regard to the long Syrian war. As a weak state, it was always a ground for regional and international conflicts. The Islamist groups are fighting on the side of the Syrian opposition. Many Islamic Arab and Turkish people are working together against the Iran's interference in the Arab countries. They are strongly supporting the Syrian military opposition. The Friends of Syrian People organized many meetings in Arab countries, Turkey, France, United States and Japan in order to unify the Syrian rebels who are fighting against the Syrian regime and its Allies.

In opposite, Hezbollah's militant forces are still fighting on the side of Syrian regime. He insisted on the reanimation of the Islamic Movements of Resistance against Israel. Its missiles could be the main cause for anticipating a new Israeli war against Lebanon. Many western leaders have warned that Lebanon is facing serious challenges including its security and political situation. The United States, as long-standing partners with the people and government of Lebanon, support Lebanon's stability, sovereignty, and independence, and ask the Lebanese government to adopt a policy of disassociation from the Syrian conflict.

For a large Arab and international opposition, Hezbollah military intervention in Syria puts Lebanon in danger. American, European, and Arab leaders condemn Hezbollah's participation in the Syrian conflict because it decided to put its interest ahead of that of the Lebanese people. Its military involvement in Syria endangers Lebanon and aims at serving the interests of Syrian President Bashar Assad and Iran, not Lebanon's interests.

In conclusion, the war in Syria has greatly impacted Lebanese state institutions. It is in the interest of the Lebanese to respect their country's stability and sovereignty and defend its state and democracy.

4. The problems of Syrian refugees in Lebanon

Lebanon has more than 400 000 Palestinian refugees in the Lebanese territories. In addition, the problem of Syrian refugees has become very dangerous for the Lebanese state and society. Citing figures from UNHCR and other U.N. agencies, the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon was estimated up to August 2013, as 914,000, or nearly 21 percent of the country's population. The World Bank report added that the number of Syrian refugees could swell to 1.3 million by the end of 2013 if the conflict continues; eventually the number of refugees could surpass two million.⁹

It is expected that the Syrian war will continue after the Syrian opposition receives new modern arms, and the number of the Syrian refugees could surpass two million refugees. This means that the number of Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon will be more than 50% of the Lebanese population. The future situation could damage Lebanon's infrastructure and stability in terms of security, economy and health. Lebanon already suffers from the problem of Palestinian refugees who arrived in Lebanon on a temporary basis and later became a permanent threat to stability and a heavy burden all sectors. Lebanon fears a repeat of the Palestinian experience with Syrian refugees if the domestic war there continues.

This problem is not linked to any negative reactions against the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, because they are not responsible for the repercussions of security practice by their own regime. Many Lebanese scholars compare Syrian refugees with their Palestinian predecessors. As a result, both of them will change the fragile balance of the Lebanese population and its impact on the socio and political situation of the Lebanese

⁹“Impact of Syria crisis beyond Lebanon's means”, *The Daily Star: Lebanon News*, September 27, 2013.

State and society. Lebanon will not be able to receive more refugees if the crisis in Syria continues.

Consequently, Lebanon is suffering because the Syrian conflict takes a disastrous toll on the country in economic, demographic and fiscal terms as it struggles to cope with a massive influx of refugees. The number of Syrian refugees could swell to 1.3 million by the end of 2013 if the conflict continues. The report also said that the Syrian conflict was straining Lebanon's health system, as a result of increased demand for services, unpaid ministry commitments to contracted hospitals, and a sharp rise in communicable diseases. Meanwhile, the increased demand for education services from Syrian school-age refugees is leading to mounting fiscal costs and eroding the quality of public education. The cost of education and a social safety net was between \$308 million to \$340 million while \$1.4 billion to \$1.6 billion would be needed for stabilization. It also noted that the conflict had depressed government revenue collection by some \$1.5 billion while increasing state expenditures by \$1.1 billion due to the surge in demand for public services, bringing the total fiscal impact to \$2.6 billion. It also acknowledged that Lebanon had no means or capabilities to sustain all these losses as a result of the presence of the Syrian refugees.¹⁰

President Michel Suleiman was addressing the U.N. General Assembly in New York and warned on September 24, 2013 that Lebanon faced a crisis of existence as a result of regional conflicts. He urged the international community to help Lebanon in order to cope with the rising flow of refugees from Syria. The Lebanese president called for a political solution to the crisis in Syria that would preserve the country's unity.

5. Syrian chemical weapons and the future of the Middle East States

On August 21, 2013, the United States confirmed that the President Bashar Assad's forces had used chemical weapons in the civil war. Russia dismissed the U.S. claim about Assad's forces using chemical weapons as lies. Russians accused the Syrian rebels of using chemical attacks against civilian in Aleppo. However, military forces in Syria had used the nerve gas sarin on a small scale, several times, causing hundreds of innocent civil victims

The Russians endorsed international control of Syria's chemical weapons only after Obama threatened to attack. The U.N. Security Council now moved center stage. The right framework was the resolution France was drafting, with U.S. help. It required Syria to place its chemical weapons under international control for supervised demolition. Syria could face military reprisals if it violates this resolution, which the French had proposed under Chapter 7, which authorizes force. Finally, the resolution called for the punishment of those responsible for the August 21, 2013 chemical attack. The Russians worked to soften this language. The next step should be the revival of peace talks in Geneva, where elements of the regime and the opposition can negotiate a cease-fire and transition plan.

The U.S. and Russia, as co-sponsors of these talks, began thinking about how to prevent a chaotic vacuum and sectarian revenge killing when a political transition begins. The lessons of Iraq and Libya are clear in that reconcilable element of the Syrian army and state institutions must remain intact so they can help the rebuilding.

The U.N. inspectors have gathered evidence that several Syrian civilians were killed by sarin nerve gas on August 21, 2013. This action was considered by the Syrian rebels as politically dangerous and immoral because it allowed President Assad to remain in power once these findings are disclosed. "The Iranians and the Obama administration should think about a new security framework for the region. Given

¹⁰Ibid, September 27, 2013.

America's profound reluctance to fight another war in the Middle East, Israel knows it will have to take responsibility for its own security, including any military action against Iraq."¹¹

On the other hand, some Syrian sources inside the country said that chemical weapons equipment had been moved recently from Syria. U.S. officials were skeptical of allegations that chemical weapons have been moved outside of Syria, either to Iraq or Lebanon. In addition, Israeli officials believe that the Syrian regime has been moving weapons inside the country to areas of greater regime control, for reasons of security.¹²

However, "the U.S.-Russian plan to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons is drawing attention to Israel's own suspected chemical stockpile and could raise pressure on the Jewish state to come clean about its capabilities. Israel signed the international landmark treaty banning the production or use of chemical weapons two decades ago, but it is among a handful of nations that have never ratified the deal. While foreign experts widely believe that Israel likely possesses a stockpile of chemical and biological weapons, Israeli officials refuse to confirm or deny the existence of any such arsenal. They say the key issue right now is about Syria, not Israel".¹³

Lebanese President Michel Suleiman hoped the U.S.-Russian understanding on destroying Syria's chemical stockpiles would be a gateway to a political solution in the strife-torn country. He asked the international community to support Lebanon in regard to the issue of Syrian refugees. Regional conflicts in Syria are still threatening Lebanon's security and stability, and are negatively affecting its economic and social conditions. In his meeting with the Lebanese president in New York, on September 24, 2013, the U.S. President Barack Obama praised Lebanon for its generosity in welcoming refugees fleeing the war in Syria, and pledged tens of millions of dollars in aid to help offset the costs of the crisis. In addition, he urged all parties in Lebanon to refrain from engaging in the 30-month-old Syrian conflict, saying the U.S. strongly rejected Hezbollah's heavy involvement in that conflict. He added that Lebanon has full U.S. support as it seeks to preserve its independence amid the regional chaos. The meeting came after Obama announced \$339 million in additional humanitarian aid in response to Syria's crisis, including \$74 million for Lebanon to support the refugees.

"Lebanon called the United Nations to secure the political and economic support for the Lebanese Army and necessary support to accommodate the Syrian refugees. Lebanese officials say the refugee influx has strained the country's health care and education systems, as well as Lebanon's economy. Lebanon is officially committed to a policy of disassociation from the Syrian crisis, despite the involvement of various Lebanese factions in the civil war there. The political crisis in Lebanon and the repercussions of the war in Syria still largely influenced the Lebanon's security and stability".¹⁴

¹¹David Ignatius, "The complicated fallout of the diplomacy over Syria". *The Daily Star, Lebanon News*, September 12, 2013.

¹²David Ignatius, "Have chemical weapons been entering Lebanon and Iraq?" *The Daily Star, Lebanon News*, September 25, 2013.

¹³"Syria deal shines light on Israeli capabilities: Experts believe Jewish state has chemical and biological arms", *The Japan Times*, September 17, 2013.

In fact, on October 6, 2013 the International disarmament experts began dismantling and destroying Syria's chemical weapons arsenal and the equipment used to produce it, taking the first concrete step in their colossal task of eliminating the country's chemical stockpile by mid-2014. "Experts begin destroying Syria chemical arms", *The Japan Times*, October 7, 2013.

¹⁴Hussein Dakroub, "Lebanon is facing a crisis of existence", *The Daily Star, Lebanon News*, September 25, 2013.

Finally, on September 27, 2013, The UN Security Council unanimously passed a landmark resolution ordering the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons and condemning a murderous poison gas attack in Damascus. The agreement represents a major breakthrough in addressing the two-and-a-half year conflict. The deal came a day after Russia's deputy foreign minister said negotiators had overcome a major hurdle and agreed that the resolution will include a reference to Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter, which allows for military and nonmilitary action to promote peace and security. UN leader Ban Ki-moon called the resolution as "the first hopeful news on Syria in a long time," and stated his hope to convene a peace conference in mid-November. The major powers overcame a prolonged deadlock to approve the first council resolution on the conflict, which is now 30 months old, and has left more than 135,000 dead.

Hence, the UNSC Resolution 2118 came as a result of bruising negotiations between the United States and Russia in order to call for Syria's estimated 1,000 tons of chemical weapons to be put under international control by mid-2014. The resolution expressed the strong conviction that those responsible for chemical weapons attacks in Syria should be held accountable. The Security Council resolution also gave backing to the 2012 conference declaration, which stated that there should be a transitional government in Syria with full executive powers. It also determined that the new peace conference would be convened to decide how to implement the accord.¹⁵

At the same time, on September 26, 2013 Syria's fractious rebel movement announced the formation of a new alliance dedicated to creating an Islamic state. The Al-Qaida-affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra, designated as a terrorist organization by the United States, is the lead signatory to the new group. Others include the Tawheed Brigade, the biggest Free Syrian Army unit in the northern city of Aleppo; Liwa al-Islam, the largest rebel group in the capital of Damascus; and Ahrar al-Sham, the most successful nationwide Syrian Salafist fighters. Collectively, the new front claims to represent 75 percent of the rebels fighting to topple the Assad regime.¹⁶

After the "historic resolution" on Assad's chemical weapons was adopted, Ban Ki-moon told the reporters "We are aiming for a conference in mid-November, 2013." He targeted anew resolution to bring political transition to Syria. The U.N.-Arab League peace envoy Lakhdar Brahimi will carry out the preparatory work required in the weeks ahead to bring together the opposition and the Assad regime. He added, "All violence must end. All the guns must fall silent".¹⁷

On September 29, 2013, Syrian President Bashar Assad declared that he is committed to compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, which calls for a ban on the possession and production of chemical weapons. Under a plan approved last week by the U.N. Security Council, Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles are to be fully destroyed by middle of next year.¹⁸

6. Syria and Lebanon after 2013: Looking to the Future

Since Syria has been facing a very hard military situation since 2011, the Lebanese are largely divided between the militants of Hezbollah, who support the Syrian regime, and the Islamic militants supporting the Syrian opposition. It should be pointed out that

¹⁵*The Washington Post*, September 27, 2013; *The Japan Times*, September 28, 2013; *The Daily Star*, *Lebanon News*, September 28, 2013.

¹⁶"Largest Syrian rebel groups ally to create Islamic state, turn back on West", *The Japan Times*, September 26, 2013.

¹⁷"U.N. passes resolution on Syrian chemicals," *The Japan Times*, September 29, 2013.

¹⁸"Chemical weapons officials cite 'efficient' coordination with Syria regime", *The Japan Times*, September 30, 2013.

the stability of both states is strictly related to the central role of the national armies in Syria and Lebanon.

The National Army, Internal Security Forces, judiciary and all other security services are the institutions entrusted with the safeguarding of citizens. Lebanese and Syrian democrats took decision to support only the National Army, because it is the only military force that could maintain stability and peace across all Lebanese and Syrian regions. It is also the only legitimate armed force that has the right to carry weapons. Any armament outside state institutions is rejected. The national army is the only force that could safeguard the Syrian and Lebanese borders.

Lebanese state and society have been heavily influenced by the Syrian war. As a weak state, Lebanon was always a base for regional and international conflicts. The Islamist groups are still fighting on the side of the Syrian opposition, and Hezbollah forces are still fighting on the side of Syrian regime. There is a dream to revitalize the Arab National Movement of Resistance against Israel. Hezbollah missiles are the main cause of a possible Israeli war against Lebanon. Hezbollah interfered in Syria after the Lebanese government failed to control its Syrian border, which has enabled Syrian rebels to move freely in and out of Lebanon.

Western leaders have always declared that Lebanon is facing serious challenges, including Lebanon's security and political situation. The United States has always asked for a long-standing partnership with the people and government of Lebanon, and still supports Lebanon's stability, sovereignty, and independence. The Lebanese government should adopt the policy of disassociation from the Syrian conflict. American, European and Arab leaders have condemned Hezbollah's participation in the Syrian war because it puts its own interests ahead of that of the Lebanese people in general.

Looking the future of the modern states in Lebanon and Syria, the aim of this paper is to present a vision of an Arab nation in regard to the causes and consequences of the Syrian uprising and its impact on state and society in Lebanon. We should remember some historical facts related to contemporary history:

1- The sectarian French mandate policy in Syria (1918-1946) failed. The division of Syria into four mini states of Damascus, Aleppo, Alawites, Druze was not viable. Syrians struggled to preserve their own Arab National Identity as it was under the late Ottoman Empire. They continue to refuse sectarian division on one side, and to preserve their Arab National Identity on the other.

2-The despotic political regime monopolized society and the state. A large confrontation between the Baath regime and sectarian Syrian communities began long before the Syrian uprising of 2011. Lebanon was largely influenced by the Syrian regime before and after this uprising.

3-After nearly three years of the Arab Uprisings, we are not shocked by the pessimistic western point of view concerning the future of the Middle East. Tony Blair wrote "As for Syria, when we contemplate the worst which can happen, we realize that it is unacceptable. We could end up with effective partition of the country, with a poor Sunni state to the East, shut out from the sea and the nation's wealth, and run by extremists. Lebanon would be totally destabilized; Iraq further destabilized; Jordan put under even greater pressure which only the courage and leadership of the king is managing at present. What was left for Assad to govern would be dependent on Hezbollah, a terrorist organization, and Iran. Our interests demand that we are engaged. We have to take decisions for the long term, because in the short term there are no simple solutions. We are in a long haul transition in the Middle East. It is difficult, time-consuming and expensive. The good news is that there are millions of modern and open-minded people

out there. They need to know we are on their side, their allies, prepared to pay the price to be there with them.”¹⁹

The reasons for the very complicated situation in these countries are mainly related to the negative role of Arab despotic leaders, the passivity of the Arab peoples towards their own problems, western policy that is still supportive of the despotic regimes in these countries, the lack of democracy.

The components of the western vision of the Arab state in Lebanon and Syria are:

a- The Arab people are always seen as subjects in sectarian communities or ethnic/tribal groups, and not seen as citizens in the modern Arab democratic state.

b- After more than fifty years of the creation of the Arab modern state, many western scholars still believe that the Arab state is not really an independent one, and some sectarian communities are still working towards independence with the help of the big foreign powers.

c- The Arab uprisings have not qualified as real revolutions. President Obama used the emotional concept of “Arab Spring”. This qualification is not accepted by Arabs because it is related to the Western “Constructive Chaos Theory”.

4- As a result of the recent civil war in Syria, more than 1.3 million Syrian refugees poured into Lebanon, equal to nearly 35% of its population. Lebanese political life - in terms of the presidency, parliament, government, national administration, social life, tourism and severe economic crisis - is nearly paralyzed. The Army, Internal Security Forces, judiciary and other security services should be the only institutions entrusted for safeguarding citizens. Lebanon should take a firm decision to support the national military forces in their role of maintaining stability across all the Lebanese regions, without exception. Only legitimate armed forces have the right to carry weapons. Any arms outside state institutions should be rejected.

5- Lebanon and Syria are still facing an Israeli plan to occupy Lebanon and a large part of Syria. This was coupled to the New Middle East Plan, which uses the so-called Sunni-Shi'a confrontation. However, the experience of the Muslim Brotherhood governing Egypt has shown that the Arab peoples of today will not accept religious state anywhere in the Middle East. Consequently, there is no room for any Sunni, Shii, Alawi, Druze, Christian or Jewish state in the future of this area.

6- Lebanon immediately needs a policy of non-alignment towards the Syrian crisis:

a- To provide confrontation between the sectarian and the national Lebanese identity.

b- To unify all Lebanese sectarian communities to save its democratic regime.

c- To prevent a new Israeli war against Lebanon using the missiles of Hezbollah.

d- To safeguard the country as an independent and sovereign state.

e- To profit from its own natural resources. Gas and oil legislation in Lebanon is at a standstill at the moment owing to the political disputes. The current government is temporary. According to Lebanese experts, only a new government accepted by all parties in the country will be able to advance legislation on this matter. Israel is now capable of stealing Lebanese gas and oil.

7- The role of the Lebanese Army is fundamental in order to save the unity of the sectarian society. “It is quite exceptional and remarkable that the Security Council, with all its members, went in a statement issued on the 10th of July 2013, as far as calling upon the international community and Lebanese leaders, of all factions and confessions, to offer to the Lebanese Army their full support as a neutral national institution and a main pillar of Lebanon's stability. The Army is and will never be a buffer force between small Lebanese armies, militias or armed groups under the pretext of defending some

¹⁹Tony Blair, “West must deal with Egypt’s de facto leadership,” *The Japan Times*, July 13, 2013.

cause that concerns a specific group, sect, neighborhood or region... the Army is the legitimate representative of the Lebanese nationalism and the constant embodiment of Lebanon's unity and the Lebanese people... the Army has been and shall always be a symbol for every transition from a present situation governed by concerns and fear to a future freed by determination and hope.”²⁰

7. Concluding Remarks

Lebanese and Syrians are both working towards becoming modern and democratic states. They no longer accept being treated as parts of the old Ottoman Empire or the French Mandate. The political movements in both countries are struggling to achieve secularity and democracy to create a new socio-economic and political regime of free and independent citizens. The Lebanese and Syrian governments need to shoulder their own responsibilities toward every individual, to achieve safety and freedom of expression. Both have been shocked by the civil war, which has led to a weak state. They still maintain a united national army that is able to safeguard the national identity. Syria still has a strong army that is facing a civil war, as well as regional and international interferences. The central government needs to ensure the monopoly of the state over the instruments of force. Loss of this monopoly is the first step towards turmoil in both Lebanon and Syria.

On the other hand, the political experience of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has shown that the fundamentalist Islamic groups are able to govern neither the Egyptian people nor the Lebanese or Syrian peoples. The ideology of these groups is not realistic, and not acceptable by the Lebanese and Syrians of today. The new governments of the Arab Uprisings must reconcile their differences with their own peoples. They should stop using arms against domestic groups, in order to end all kinds of sectarian conflict and violence or terrorist attacks against the central state and national army. The failure of the Arab Uprisings has resulted from intolerance of the Muslim Brotherhoods, who are steadily working to impose their own doctrines by force. But the Arab peoples strongly refuse religious obligations. They realize that democracy only works in a pluralistic concept, where people from all communities should respect one another.

The war in Syria has greatly impacted Lebanese state institutions. It is in the interest of the Lebanese to respect their country's stability and sovereignty and defend their own state and democracy. The Syrian conflict has demonstrated the impact of the two neighboring countries. Syria's growing fragmentation and descent into chaos fuel Lebanon's sectarian polarization. Lebanon is a weak state due to the fragile sectarian balance inside the Lebanese institutions. Consequently, there are many reasons to fear that the situation in Lebanon will worsen. The Syrian refugee problem is already demonstrating political, social and economic impact over Lebanese state and society. The Syrians of today are not ready to accept the sectarian division refused by their ancestors during the French Mandate. Peace in Syria and Lebanon as well as in the whole Middle East is a common responsibility of liberal, secular, and democratic peoples of the Middle East. There is an urgent need to safeguard the unity, sovereignty, territories and institutions of the whole state in this area. The United Nations should work to immediately stop the bloody confrontations in Syria. Millions of innocent peoples have been killed or injured or displaced from their houses and countries without any real political, social or economic changes. All democratic public opinion around the world, as

²⁰“Speech of H.E President of the Republic of Lebanon General Michel Suleiman during the sword presentation ceremony to the officers graduating from the Military School on the 68th Army Day Yarze”, August 1, 2013.(www.presidency.gov.lb.)

well as the real friends of Lebanese and Syrian peoples in democratic countries, are invited to contribute for stopping the war in Syria. They should work for a global peace, and not allow the provision of new arms to the Syrian rebels, to further destroy the state and society. The continuity of the war will not only destroy Lebanon and Syria, but also risks destroying the whole system in the Middle East. The new Arab uprisings of 2011 should be seen objectively as movements of liberalization of Arab individuals to free themselves, as citizens in democratic and modern states.