



Canadians for Justice and Peace  
in the Middle East



# Module 4: State of Affairs in Lebanon

CJPME Policy Leadership  
May, 2007



# Agenda for this Module

- Context in Lebanon
  - Confessionalism
  - Brief history
  - Civil War and Taif Accord
- Current Tensions
  - Investigation of Hariri assassination
  - Resolution 1701
  - Lack of compliance with Resolution 1701



*UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visits UNIFIL troops in Lebanon in the Spring of 2007. There are currently about 13,000 UNIFIL troops in south Lebanon, although 1701 authorized up to 15,000.*



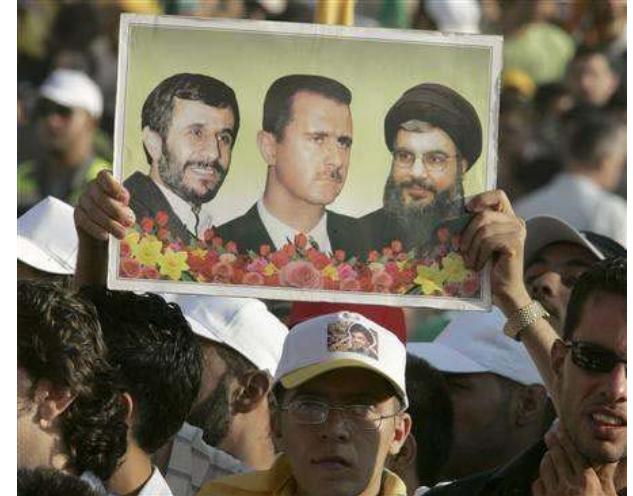
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# **Lebanon: Confessionalism / Background / Civil War**

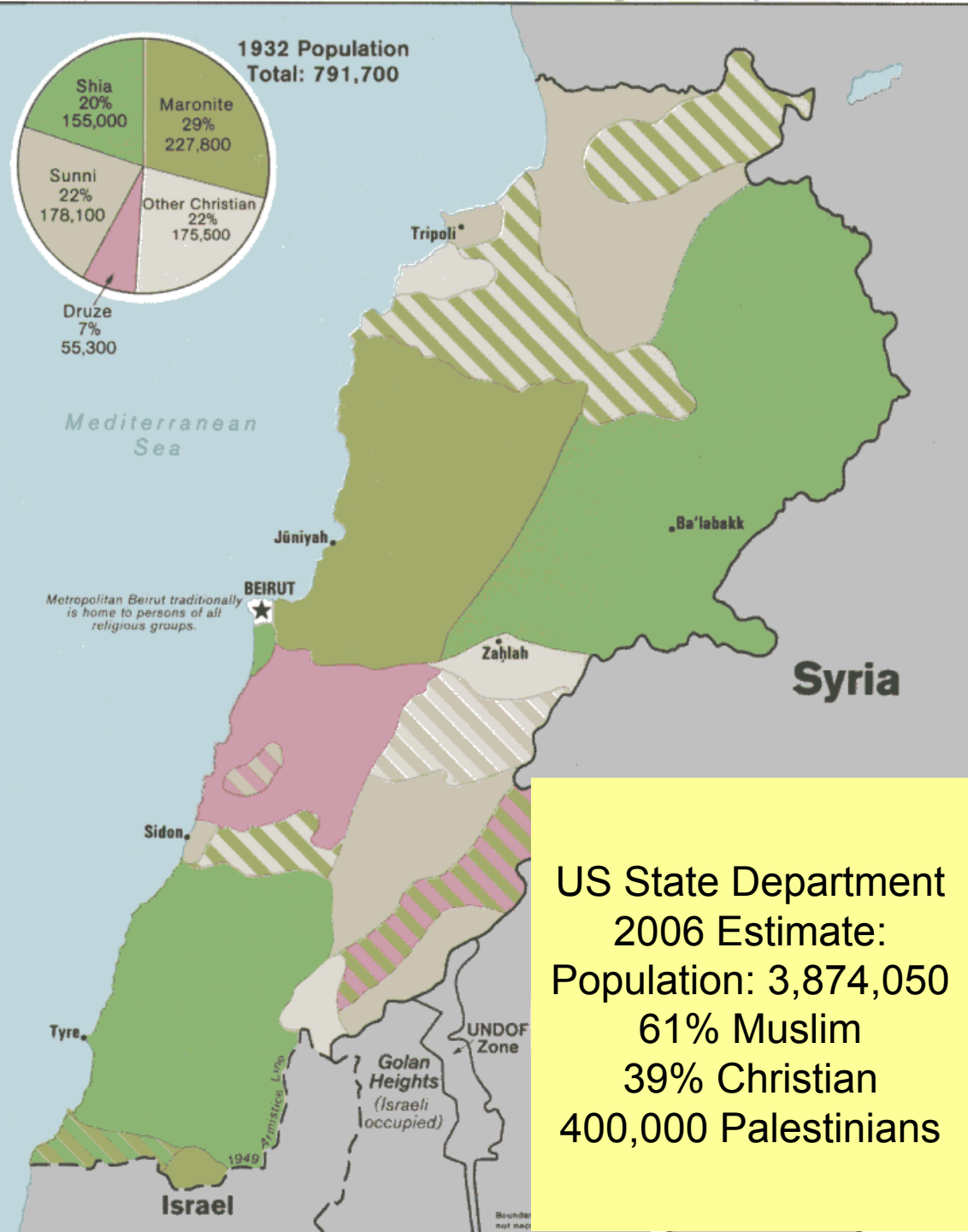
# Basic Facts about Lebanon

- Size: about 70 percent as big as Connecticut
- Population (2006): 3.8 Million
  - 95 percent Arab
  - 3 percent Armenian
- 18 officially recognized religious communities; estimated sizes are (US State Dept / CIA):
  - 35 percent Shi'a Muslim
  - 21 percent Sunni Muslim
  - 5 percent Druze
  - 39 percent Christian (Maronite and Other)
- About 400K Palestinian refugees, some in Lebanon since 1948 (non-citizens, not counted above)
- No official census since 1932



*A poster held up by a Lebanese man during a demonstration in Beirut this past winter illustrates the divisive forces at play within Lebanon due to internal and external influences.*

# Demographics



# Creation of the Lebanese State

- 1920: French mandate in Lebanon-Syria is established.
  - Confessional communities relate differently with the French, deepening economic and political tensions.
  - Maronite Christians seek a state closely allied with France and the West, and one which entrenches Maronite political dominance.
  - Significant territorial and demographic expansion of Maronite population
- 1926: First constitution established, modeled after that of the French Third Republic
- 1943: Unity among confessions is driven by common desire to drive out the French. “National Pact” was the agreement which enabled confessions to come together, laying ground rules for the new state
  - Maronites not to seek foreign intervention and to accept Lebanon as an "Arab" affiliated country, instead of a "Western" one;
  - Muslims (Shi'ites and Sunnis) to abandon their aspirations to unite with Syria
- Late 1960s, early 1970s: Influx of, and tension due to Palestinian refugees
- 1975-1990: The Lebanese Civil war
- 1990-2005: Post-war reconstruction



*A view of what is known as “Mount Lebanon” – forming the dominant feature of central Lebanon. The Mount itself was traditionally a stronghold of Lebanon’s Maronite community*

# Lebanese Society and Government: Largely a “Confessional” Structure

- Under the Ottoman Empire, the *Millet* system attributed authority to religious structures
- The National Pact (1943) establishes Lebanon’s political foundations on a confessional system based on the 1932 census. Seats in parliament and positions in the government bureaucracy are divided on a 6-to-5 ration of Christians to Muslims. Also key roles are allocated as follows:
  - President – a Maronite Christian
  - Prime Minister – a Sunni Muslim
  - Speaker of Parliament – a Shi’a Muslim
  - Deputy Speaker of the Parliament – a Greek Orthodox
- Religious courts have jurisdiction over personal status matters within particular religious communities, e.g., rules on such matters as marriage, divorce, and inheritance.
- Chamber of Deputies (the “Cabinet”) seats are determined based on a system of proportional representation for the various confessional groups
- High degree of political involvement of religious leaders with the political and party leaders. Powerful families also play a role in mobilizing votes for local and parliamentary elections.



*Prime minister Fouad Siniora in February, 2006. According to the National Pact, Mr. Siniora is a Sunni Muslim.*

# Challenges of “Confessionalism”

- Confessionalism: system of government that distributes political and institutional power proportionally among religious communities
- The “Minority Complex”
  - Every group is fighting for survival; all events viewed through a “survival” lens
  - Any change to the status quo can represent a threat the confessional groups (e.g. influx of Palestinian refugees)
  - All groups must constantly reassert their legitimacy
- Positive aspects of Confessionalism: allows for peaceful co-existence of diverse religious and ethnic communities by empowering each according to its demographic weight in the region
- Negative aspects of Confessionalism: can emphasize confessional lines, and thus deepen conflict between ethnic groups
  - Whichever group holds the most political power may use government to favour itself at the expense of other groups, or even to oppress rival groups.
  - As demographics change, the positions and power held by a particular group may no longer appropriately reflect the size of that group
  - Putting governance in the hands religious and communal institutions has the effect of disempowering the state and the individual



*Lebanese woman protesting presumed Syrian involvement in the assassination of Rafik Hariri, former Prime Minister of Lebanon, in 2005*

# The Lebanese Civil War, 1975-1990: A war nobody can fully explain

- Internal tensions
  - Changing demographics
  - Creation of confessional militias
  - Inability to use the Lebanese Army to establish order
- External tensions
  - Palestinian military and refugee presence
  - Arab nationalism and the cold war
  - Israeli invasions of 1978 and 1982
- Bottom line:
  - There were dozens of active militias
  - There were no “good guys”
  - Rather than strategic moves and campaigns, it was a war of opportunistic small scale “tit for tat” strikes
  - Seven percent of Lebanon’s population at the time is killed. 100,000 left handicapped
  - 900,000 Lebanese displaced in 1975-76
  - Ultimately, 250,000 Lebanese emigrate permanently



*Survivors carry pictures of loved ones lost during the Lebanese civil war. About 22,000 people disappeared during the 15 years of civil war.*

# The Ta'if Accord

- Arab League helps negotiate an accord for Lebanese national reconciliation in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia
- The Ta'if Accord stipulates:
  - Parliament expanded to 128 seats and is equally divided between Christians and Muslims (with Druze counted as Muslims)
  - In 1991, an amnesty law is passed which pardons all political crimes prior to its enactment.
  - In 1991, sectarian militias are dissolved and are all supposed to disarm; the Lebanese Armed Forces begins to rebuild itself
  - Phased withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon



*The Ta'if Accords in 1990 brought an end to the Lebanese civil war which had devastated Beirut.*

# Tensions with Israel

- 1948: Lebanon fights against the establishment of the state of Israel. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees arrive in Lebanon.
- 1967: Israel occupies area of Lebanese territory called the Shabaa Farms in 1967 (next to the Syrian Golan)
- 1967, 1970: Additional waves of Palestinian refugees – unable to keep their homes in Palestine/Israel – are forced to enter Lebanon
- 1978: Israel invades Lebanon in 1978, and occupies most of the area south of the Litani River, ostensibly to curb Palestinian violence launched from Lebanon
- 1978-2000: Israel establishes the South Lebanon Army (SLA), a primarily Maronite army which is Israeli-supported and armed. The SLA helps Israel retain a 12-mile “security
- 1982: Israel further invades Lebanon (following an assassination attempt in London, UK), occupying Beirut for several years
- 1990s: Frequent Israeli strikes against Hezbollah and Palestinians in Lebanon. Many Hezbollah strikes against Israeli occupation
- 1996: Israeli strike on UN post in Cana (Lebanon) killing 102 Lebanese civilians
- 2000: Israel withdraws from Lebanon; SLA collapses
- 2000-2006: Hundreds of violations of Blue Line by Israel per month
- 2006: Israeli destruction of Lebanon; over 1000 killed, \$4B in damages



*Israeli soldiers launch strikes against Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon soon after the Destruction of Lebanon began.*



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# Current Sources of Tension in Lebanon

# Events in Lebanon since August, 2006

- Aug. 14, 2006: Ceasefire resolution (1701) is passed
- Oct, 2006: UN semi-annual report on adherence to resolution 1559
- Nov, 6 2006: Political negotiations regarding the proposed international investigation of Hariri assassination begin
- Nov. 11, 2006: Amal, Hezbollah, and Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) resign from government
- Nov. 21, 2006: Pierre Gemayel is assassinated
- Dec. 1, 2006: Sit-in at Prime Minister's office begins (and is still ongoing)
- Dec. 1, 2006: UN quarterly report on adherence to Resolution 1701
- Dec/Jan/Feb, 2006/2007: Occasional violent clashes and acts of violence
- Jan 16, 2007: "March 14<sup>th</sup> Alliance" accuses Syria of smuggling arms into Lebanon
- Mar, 2007: Saudi Arabia and leader of Arab League get opponents talking again. No substantive result.
- Mar. 14, 2007: UN quarterly report on adherence to Resolution 1701
- Apr. 10, 2007: Gov't asks UN to assist in setting up international tribunal
- May 7, 2007: UN semi-annual report on adherence to resolution 1559



*UNIFIL's Maritime Task Force patrolling off the coast of Lebanon in October, comprised of German, Swedish, and Danish vessels. Since it went into action, the MTF has verified the identity of 3000 ships, of which 10 were considered suspicious. On inspection in port, however, no arms were found.*

# Hariri Assassination Investigation

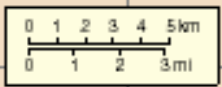
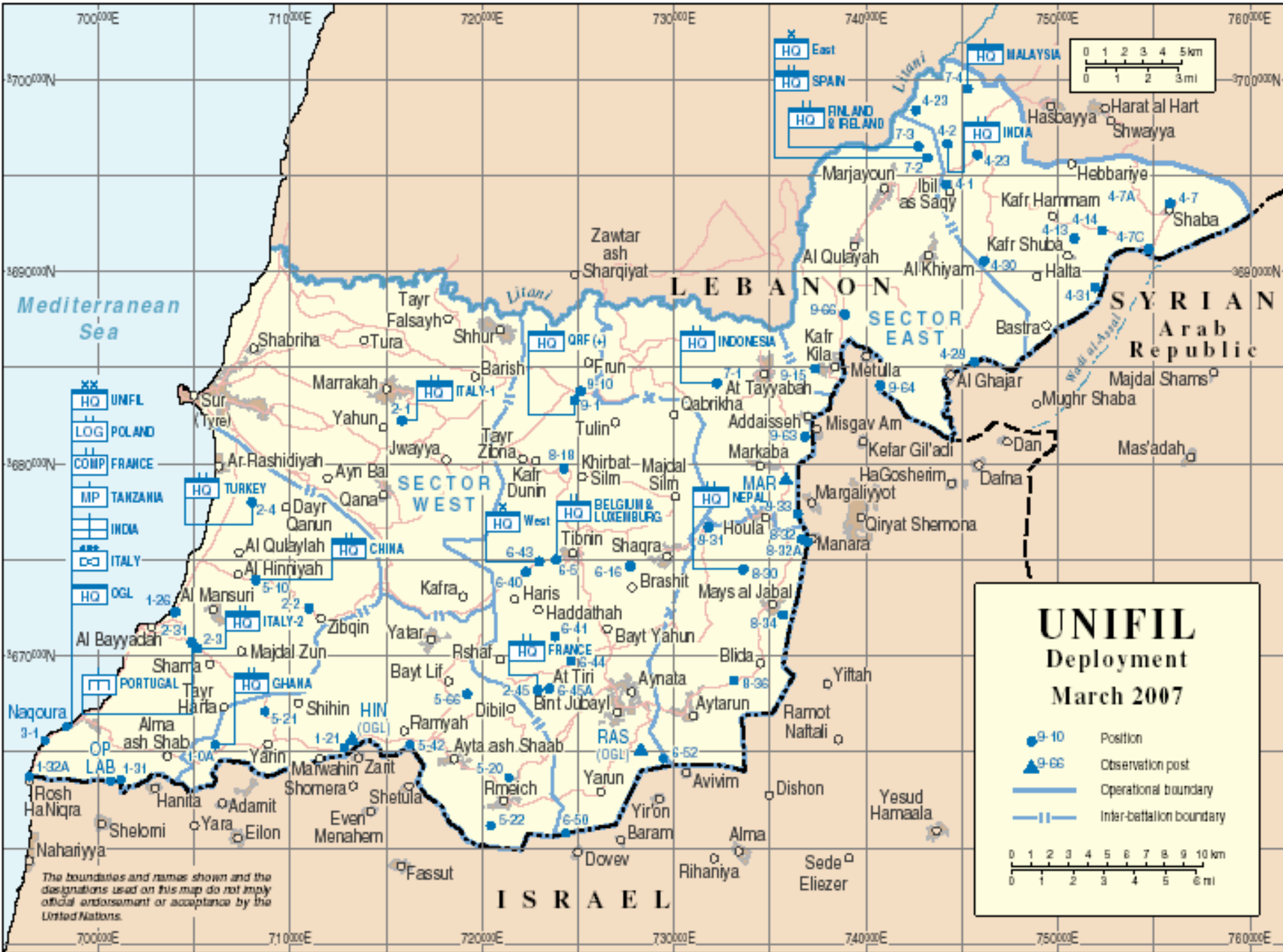
- Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005: Hariri is assassinated in a massive bombing in Beirut
- Mar. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005: Under accusations from the international community (including Russia) Syrian president Bashar Assad announces that Syria will withdraw from Lebanon
- Mar. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005: With a call from Hassan Nasrallah (Hezbollah) a massive demonstration – hundreds of thousands – in support of Syria takes place in Beirut
- Mar. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005: An even bigger demonstration takes place (on the one-month anniversary of Hariri's assassination.) Likely 800,000 in attendance.
- Mar. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2005: The Fitzgerald Report – a UN fact-finding mission on the assassination – is issued which directs suspicion on Syria, and calls Lebanon's own investigation into the killing "flawed and inconclusive." The UN commissions another report – the Mehlis Report
- Apr. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005: The last of Syrian troops withdraw from Lebanon
- Oct. 20, 2005: The UN Mehlis Report implicates Syrian and Lebanese officials
- Dec. 10, 2005: A second Mehlis Report confirms findings of the first.
- Late 2006 / early 2007: The UN and Government of Lebanon agree to establish a Special Tribunal for Lebanon to reopen the Hariri investigation. This decision is very much opposed by Hezbollah (Shiite), Amal (Shiite) and Free Patriotic Movement (Aoun/Christian), which resign from the government in December, 2006 and become "the opposition." Such a Tribunal could try individuals for involvement in the assassination.
- Late 2006 – Present: The Opposition undermines the legitimacy of the current government, also known as the "March 14 Coalition."
- Summer, 2007: Elections expected

# Resolution 1701

- In addition to the ceasefire, Resolution 1701 (Aug. 2006) established:
  - Authority of Lebanese govt over all of Lebanon (as per 1559 (2004) and Taif)
  - Respect for Blue Line
  - Keep area between Blue Line and Litani River free from arms/activities other than those of the Lebanese Army
  - No sales of arms to Lebanese groups except as authorized by Lebanese govt
  - Provision of all maps of all landmines by Israel
  - Expand UNIFIL to 15,000 troops
  - Outlaws any outside military assistance to Lebanese militias
- In UNIFIL, as of 11 April this year, there were 13,058 military personnel:
  - 11,000 troops and nearly
  - 1,700 in the maritime task force
  - 500 local and international civilian staff



*UNIFIL Patrol along the Blue Line in November, 2006*



## UNIFIL Deployment March 2007

- 9-10 Position
- ▲ 9-66 Observation post
- Operational boundary
- Inter-battalion boundary

*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.*

**I S R A E L**

# Compliance with 1701: Israeli violations

- Village of Ghajar. Israel continues to maintain presence in northern part of town of Ghajar (located across the Blue Line)
- Israeli ground violations. Several tense ground violations by Israel in February and March.
- Israeli air violations.
  - Ongoing air violations of Lebanese airspace, “on an almost daily basis” UNIFIL also reported that air violations “on some days exceeded ten Israeli over-flights in its area of operations”
  - Low-altitude, high-speed overflights happened repeatedly in early 2007
    - French almost launched an anti-aircraft missile on one occasion
    - “French officials contend that the over-flights are designed to provoke Hezbollah into renewing its attacks on Israeli targets, opening the way for massive retaliation”
    - German intelligence warship patrolling border also threatened by Israeli plane firing its canons (October, 2006)
    - German and Swedish ships approached threateningly by Israeli ship (May, 2007)
    - Several incidents of Israeli jets locking attack radar on German naval helicopters
- Israeli Justifications and Lebanon’s counterpoints.
  - Israel argues that the overflights are necessary to monitor compliance with the arms embargo of 1701.
  - Lebanon, in an April 4<sup>th</sup> letter, asked that Israeli overflights not be linked to the enforcement of the arms embargo

# Compliance with 1701: Lebanon/Hezbollah alleged Violations

- Hezbollah's suspected violations
  - Hezbollah Secretary General Nasrallah says Hezbollah has elements operating in South Lebanon (although UNIFIL had not observed such operations) (Feb, 2007)
  - Truckload of mortars, mortar shells, rockets and flares was seized on Feb. 8. Nasrallah claimed that this was Hezbollah equipment, and demanded that it be returned
  - Nasrallah also has admitted more broadly that Hezbollah is transporting arms
  - UNIFIL has also received reports of armed elements – suspected of being Hezbollah – constructing new facilities north of the Litani River.
  - Israel accuses Lebanese elements of literally hundreds of shipments of arms. Lebanon has asked to see evidence of this, to assess the veracity of the accusations
- Lebanese Army border operations
  - The Lebanese Army numbers about 55,000, of which about 8,000 have been deployed to monitor the border.
  - The Lebanese Army admits to insufficient capacity to doing all the monitoring necessary, and has asked for additional equipment, and UNIFIL bilateral help monitor the border

# Other Issues: Cluster Bombs

- As of Feb. 27, 2007:
  - 22 deaths, and 159 injuries from cluster bomblets
  - 854 cluster bomb strike locations had been identified
  - These strike locations covered 34 million square meters (i.e. 34 sq. km.)
  - Some strike locations had been cleared of land mines prior to 2006
  - As of Jan. 25, about 10 percent of contaminated area had been cleared, through the location and destruction of 103,000 bomblets
  - Lots of other unexploded ordinance also litters south Lebanon (unexploded bombs, rockets, mortars, etc.)
- UN reports note that Israel has refused to provide maps of cluster bomb strikes, despite repeated requests to do so.
- Belgian experts in Lebanon estimated at the end of April that 800,000 unexploded bomblets still remained to be cleared. Belgian experts expected the job to take another 3-5 years, not including hills and other areas where munitions have not been found
- Israel apparently did hand over all remaining maps of land mine fields laid during their occupation up through 2000.



*A Chinese demining team with UNIFIL demines in the village of Hiniyeh in August, 2006*

# Other Issues: Prisoners, Blue Line Demarcation, etc.

- Prisoners
  - Hezbollah still not allowing access to the two Israeli soldiers
  - Red Cross has been allowed access to the Lebanese soldiers being held by Israel
  - UN has been pushing for a prisoner exchange “based on strict restraint on demands, moderation and compassion with the victims of the recent conflict.”
- Blue Line
  - Blue Line is to be clearly marked in certain areas where there tends to be tension
  - Cartographers are reviewing all available info on the Shabaa Farms, and Golan Heights, and will be making an assessment soon
- Other
  - Lebanese communities in the south question why UNIFIL now needs tanks and other heavy equipment. Questions how the equipment will be used if an Israeli invasion occurs
  - UNIFIL convoys have often come under attack from stones in recent months



*A UN peacekeeper works with an officer of the Lebanese Armed Forces in September, 2006*