Lebanon: Important Dates

Ancient home of Phoenicians

64 AD Conquered by Rome, governed from Syria. Aramaic dominant language

7th century: Arab conquest, who govern from Damascus

11th century Crusades

Late 12th century; muslim/arab reconquest, directed from Egypt

16th century, Ottoman Turks gain control

1850s **civil wars**, in which a religious content (Druze, Christians, Moslems) is important. Many Christian Lebanese emigrate to the Americas

post WWI- French mandate (Lebanon, Syria, Antakya of present day Turkey), as Greater Lebanon. An unwritten “National Pact” divides political power among Shi’is, Sunnis and Christians, with France favoring Maronite Christians.

1944/45 Independence

late 1940s; although Lebanon took little part in wars against newly established Israel, it was affected by settlement of Palestinian refugees

1958 **civil strife** as Lebanon’s pro-Western policies were challenged: US forces intervene

1975 **civil war**, Muslims (and PLO) against (Maronite, Phalange) Christians. Eventual participation of Syria, US, France.

1978 **Israel invades southern Lebanon**. UN Peacekeeping mission in southern Lebanon

1982 **Israel again invades Lebanon**, forcing relocation of PLO headquarters. Massacre of ~1,000 Palestinian refugees in camps in Sabra and Chatila in west Beirut by Lebanese Christian Phalangists during Israeli occupation, which leads to multinational peacekeeping mission. Amin Gemayel (Christian) elected president.

1983 Suicide bombing of barracks of US and French troops stationed outside Beirut

1985 Israeli troops withdraw from Lebanon, although a contingent remains in Southern Lebanon (until 2000)

1988-9 conflict about the successor to president, Amin Gemayel, who had appointed Michel Aoun as interim president, while others had pushed Elias Hrawi, who eventually dominated.

1989 **Taif Accord** marks end of Civil War, restructures National Pact somewhat towards Shia, from Maronites, and legitimizes Hizbullah in southern Lebanon. Some claim the treaty that gave Syria dominance in Lebanon’s foreign relations.

1990s and later: Rebuilding of Beirut, orchestrated by Rafiq Hariri

2005 **Assassination** of Hariri, still unsolved, although many point to Syria and/or Hizbullah. Int’l pressure forces Syria to withdraw.

2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict in south; Israeli jets destroy much infrastructure

2008 Michel Suleiman selected as President

2010-11 Saad Hariri replaced by Najib Maikati. Move said to be orchestrated by Hizbullah, which refuses to accept the judgment of UN Special Tribunal that R. Hariri was assassinated by Hizbullah operatives.