



## **Defense Strategy**

*Elusive National Objective*

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## **Abstract**

Although the term *Defense Strategy* can be a rather esoteric one within the circles of political science, it is actually a fundamental concept to the art of statesmanship. This paper defines *Defense Strategy* as being the strategic and prioritized protection of assets and interests from all threats by any means necessary – in essence, *Defense Strategy* is the study and application of grand strategy.

A national *Defense Strategy* is crucial to the survival of a state in a modern, globalized, and hyper-competitive world. The term is not limited to the domain of the military, and rather encompasses all of a state's assets whether they be demographic, natural, and technological inter alia. Comprehensive *Defense Strategies* are adopted within timeframes and must determine and prioritize state assets for protection before conceptualizing possible threats to these assets and finally working on mitigating these threats. Threats to state assets are either (i) potential or present, (ii) internal or external, and may occur during either (iii) peace or war.

The Lebanese Republic does not currently have a comprehensive *Defense Strategy*. This paper explores the reasons for this oversight and the legal and constitutional mechanisms surrounding such a policy. Finally, this paper proposes a *Defense Strategy* for the Lebanese Republic. Not comprehensive by any means, this proposed *Defense Strategy* nevertheless discusses Lebanon's assets in light of its geopolitical status and posits propositions in the matter of geography, military, water security, economy, human capital, intelligence, and finally oil & gas. This proposition has a self-admitted hamartia – it does not account for Hezbollah and other armed groups, as to do so would be impossible given the diplomatic intricacy and sensitivity of the matter. Indeed, the matter of Hezbollah and other armed groups is one of the main reasons why there is no Lebanese *Defense Strategy* to begin with. The Lebanese Republic must determine whether or not Hezbollah et al. are a national asset or a national threat, something that it has so far failed to do. This paper does not take a position on the matter.



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## I. What is “Defense Strategy”?

“Defense Strategy”, “Defensive Strategies”, et al. are interchangeable terms whose meaning can be understood in compound through a thorough understanding of each in part, i.e., that of “strategy” and “defense” within the context of the political sciences, especially in the realm of statesmanship.

- 1) **Strategy:** A plan and mode of execution for the attainment of long-term goals under uncertain, usually dynamic, conditions.
- 2) **Defense:** The protection of one’s assets and interests from all threats, including the promise of threats.

Strategy itself greatly differs from tactics, which are more concerned with the short term, and has a long history in the military sciences, going as far back as the Hellenic στρατηγός (*strategos*), meaning “general”. In this sense the term strategy itself is deeply ingrained with the psyche of warfare. This is because warfare as a rule brings out the best of humans – it is during war that we are our most competitive, simply because we have ample reason to be, i.e., we as humans, now have skin in the game. Where we would normally be complacent, the very fact that our survival would most likely depend on the outcome of the war means that the belligerents have a vested interest to win, and to pit their entire resources (as a collective) to that war effort, lest it all ‘end’. This is one of the main motivators of human innovation, the desperate desire to create an edge over one’s opponent, and so secure victory.

Furthermore, the fact that states (especially modern states) are the most affluent of social persons, necessitates innovation as there would be more resources allocated to the achievement of that innovation. Examples of technological innovations during or as a result of war, armed conflict, or innovations with military origins, or rapid advancements in those fields, include: the steam engine, canned food, Egyptology,<sup>1</sup> microwaves, duct tape, GPS, the Internet, Radio, Radar, satellites, cryptography, and others.

Strategic planning therefore requires one to properly assess and quotient the fundamental dynamics at play within the operational level under study, and to predict the outcome of the dynamic relationship over time.

Taken in this context, the term *Defense Strategy* can be understood as being the efforts undertaken by the ‘state’<sup>2</sup> to protect its assets and interests from all strategic threat’s potential or actual through a complex matrix of prioritized decision making so as to optimize the inherent transactional tradeoff. What does this mean? It means that every decision has an associated cost-benefit pair; decisions are not made in a controlled environment, nor in a vacuum. Therefore, the strategist must weigh the ramifications of each decision keeping in mind the many other considerations at play before organizing them into a prioritized list according to subjective value systems.

More simply, the notion of *Defense Strategy* implies the strategic, prioritized protection of assets and interests from all threats by any means necessary. It is, in essence, the study and application of grand strategy.

<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, both Egyptology and the invention of canned food (Nicolas Appert, *The Art of Preserving Animal and Vegetable Substances*, 1811) came as a direct result of Napoleon I’s efforts. (Wright, 1941).

<sup>2</sup> Or competent, well developed non-state actors. Examples could include Hezbollah. For simplicity, the paper will continue to use the term state, despite the fact that it is not limited to that in the traditional sense.

## II. What makes Defense Strategy so important?

“The first contribution of Spain to international peace and security is to guarantee its own, with strength and resolve, procuring the capabilities to ensure deterrence when faced with... threats”<sup>3</sup>

*Defense Strategy* as a discipline remains one of the more esoteric of the political sciences. Very simply, a quick Google search of the term is unlikely to yield fruitful results, this realm of statesmanship is reserved for the upper echelons of academia and politicking. One might rightly wonder why this is so, however the answer once explained will be revealed to be self-apparent.

After all, Defense Strategy deals with the most fundamental functions of state in the most competitive of environments – the real world – and is deeply rooted in military and game theory. Resources are fundamentally scarce while human interests abound, creating perpetual competition. Furthermore, it must not be simplified as such to be so materialistic; state actors are essentially made up of human agents, and these human agents are emotional, imperfect, and dogmatic. For this reason, states do sometimes compete over moral elements, such as titles, recognition, history, religion, and even diplomatic ventures.

Historical examples of this would be European disputes over imperial titles. Imperium in Europe is legitimized through association with the Roman Empire, which was by the time of Theodosius I's death in 395 AD permanently split into Eastern and Western parts, both administratively and militarily. This institutionalized two permanent imperial seats, one in Constantinople, and the other in Rome (which was sometimes substituted by the imperial residences in Milano and Ravenna; despite this, the Senate remained in Rome). The 5<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the fall of the Western Empire, leading to a Western imperial *sede vacante*; the East remained steadfast. The first dispute over imperial titles occurred on Christmas Day in the year 800 AD, when Pope Leo III declared Karolus Magnus (better known as Charlemagne) Emperor Augustus, i.e., Emperor of the West. This was only the first instance of conflict; the Latins, the Germans, the Russians, and yes, even the Ottoman Turks, all claimed Roman imperial heritage. The Ottomans, surprisingly, styled their sultans as *Kayser-i Rum*, or *Caesar of the Romans*, a tradition begun with Sultan Mehmet II's conquest of Constantinople (on which act the claim was based).

This all goes to show that the narrow thinking that would limit the scope of Defense Strategy to the military aspect only is abjectly wrong. The Great Powers have not since the Second World War warred with one another; does that mean that they have now adopted absolute pacifism? No, not at all, the competition is fiercer than ever, with more avenues and mechanisms for the compromise of one another than ever before. War is the continuation of politics by other means, says Carl von Clausewitz, and rightfully so.<sup>4</sup> If therefore there is no distinction of kind between War and Peace, each being a mode of politicking, why then should defensive strategies encompass only military objectives and during war time? It must be extended to all of the state's assets, in both war and peace, and to protect from all threats, internal and external, and by whatever avenue these threats may be realized. These assets include such things as a state's reputation and international standing, its international alliances, geography, ecology, resources, the economy, the citizens, the military, public health, etc.

When disasters strike, one must react quickly, decisively, and positively. Very simply the timing and scale of sudden calamity whether man made or not has the potential to overwhelm the

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<sup>3</sup> (Spain, 2012, p. 3).

<sup>4</sup> (Clausewitz, 1832).

state's information systems and hamper responsiveness; this might lead to a catastrophic and total failure. It is unsurprising then that states consider their defensive strategies to be of the utmost importance, as they are rather all encompassing. The preparation of a proper Defense Strategy plan requires arduous work in advance, including the conceptualizing of all potential threats so that one can properly defend against them.

To prepare a defensive strategy, the state must, within a certain (potentially indefinite) timeframe:

- 1) *Determine* the assets worth protecting.
- 2) *Conceptualize* the threats to these assets.
- 3) *Mitigate* these threats, preemptively or otherwise; this step includes both planning and modes of execution.

Threats to such assets usually operate on three different axes:

- 1) **Potential v. Present**, i.e., is the threat present at the moment, or shall the state face it in the future?
- 2) **Internal v. External**, i.e., is the point of origin from within the state or from without?
- 3) **Peacetime v. Wartime**, i.e., is this a threat in the event of war, or is the state subject to such a threat during peacetime?

Indeed, any threat to national security is a threat that needs be addressed in a comprehensive defensive strategy. Pandemics such as COVID-19 are often included in national defense strategies, especially when considering national healthcare policy, as it is the state's duty to fight such a pandemic in such a way so as to best protect its citizens. This is especially true in the era of lethal bioweapons, where there exists the distinct possibility of a disease being biologically engineered and released by hostile parties. The link between pandemics and national [military] security is explicitly stated in Spain's National Defence Directive (2020).<sup>5</sup>

The peace and internal stability of the state are also assets worth protecting in National Defense strategies, especially in states with fractured populations. For example, there has for some time now existed a tension between the Turks and the Kurds, both within Turkey and without, in neighboring nations such as Iraq and Syria. There is the distinct threat of the emergence of Kurdistan to the states of the Middle East, especially Iraq and Turkey, and so despite the fact that these Kurds are citizens of their respective states, the states themselves must account for the possibility of the emergence of a Kurdistan across both borders and so find avenues to deal with such threats. The origins of this conflict are diverse, and although ethnic tensions may play a role, there is a much more materialistic reason for the tension in that a Kurdish secession or partition would compromise Turkish Water and Energy security – the population of the Mesopotamian highlands is predominantly Kurdish, it is this region from which originates the water supply of the Tigris-Euphrates water system, hence the presence of the Ataturk hydroelectric dam.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, in Lebanon for instance, national unity is integrity to the coherence of any defensive strategy, as Lebanon's ethno-religious groups have a storied history of infighting and civil war. Furthermore,

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<sup>5</sup> (Spain, 2020, p. 1).

<sup>6</sup> (Kanaan & Abou Hamze, 2021).

terrorism remains a distinct threat to international peace and security.<sup>7</sup> This of course must be accounted for as part of a nation's defensive strategy.

Defense Strategy policies are not meant to be instituted sporadically, despite their long-term nature. Continuous reiterations are required to keep up with the dynamic initial conditions (which are ever in flux). Technological innovations, too, necessitate a readjustment of the state's national defense policy. The advent of the internet for example necessitated the pioneering of the cyber security sector, and this too must be included in a national defense strategy. The internet is home to sensitive records including the access codes to certain state military facilities, and so this avenue represents a serious vulnerability that would need to be addressed. Famous examples of cyber-attacks include the Israeli *Stuxnet* aimed at Iranian nuclear sites such as Natanz.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Saudi Aramco was decisively crippled for a short period of time by the virus Shamoon in 2012, the privacy of its data was also compromised.<sup>9</sup> The Israelis are not the only ones to be so interested in the field of cyber warfare – China, Russia, and the United States are also heavily invested in this domain.<sup>10</sup> In the context of national security and defense, cyber security can also include cyber-attacks, and due to the nascence of this field states are unwilling to elaborate or publicize their doctrine.<sup>11</sup>

Threats need not be man-made, as the threat of natural disasters can be included within a state's defense strategy. This is especially true in states where there exists a large risk for such disasters, be they earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tornadoes, or even hurricanes. Each of these disasters can seriously affect the state's citizens, not only through the loss of life but also through permanent injury and eviction from the workforce, through the disruption of economic activity, destruction of property and infrastructure, etc. These cases serve to highlight the contingency aspect of strategic defensive planning. Such plans would be drawn up by strategists, who would be conceptualizing each possible outcome and event, with each iteration necessitating a different strategy (while allowing room for impromptu on the ground decision making). The benefit of contingency planning is that it allows strategists the luxury of time, something that is in desperate scarcity in the heat of events. Decisions made in advance are less likely to be bad decisions because the strategist would have ample time and resources (including information) to correctly assess and prioritize decisions based on their cost-benefit pair. On the other hand, the spontaneity of events, especially tragedy and conflict, usually results in the strategist not even having enough information to formulate a decision, let alone the time to wait for information or to study the events at play. For this reason, the best defensive strategies are all encompassing, even down to the mechanism of execution. For example, should "Event X" happen, then Fire Brigade 2 would be the first respondent, and so on and so forth.

In fact, there is no reason for a respectable state not to have a contingency in case an enemy targeted its infrastructure. For example, Lebanon should have had a contingency in case the Beirut Port was in any way incapacitated or targeted. The lack of proper planning in advance could easily be discerned from the chaos in the immediate aftermath of August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Whatever the cause of the Beirut explosion, the fact remains that Lebanon has been at war with Israel since 1948, and so there is an ever-present threat that the Israeli Air Force or even Navy destroy the Beirut Port. It does not matter how the port was destroyed, the fact remains that it was destroyed,

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<sup>7</sup> S/RES/2249 (2015).

<sup>8</sup> (Farwell & Rohozinski, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> (Bronk & Tikk-Ringas, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> (Shakarian, Shakarian, & Ruef, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> (Farwell & Rohozinski, 2012).

and so the reaction should have been pretty much the same. Unfortunately, Lebanon does not have a defensive strategy, despite being arguably one of the states in most need of such a document.

Furthermore, it would be wrong to assume defensive planning to be a passive pastime. The truth is that the result of thorough defensive planning sometimes requires preemptive action in order to address threats; this preemptive action may indeed be violent in nature. For example, a strategic assessment of a nation's cybersecurity architecture could reveal a major vulnerability – this would have to be addressed. On the other hand, a defensive strategy might dictate a first strike doctrine, wherein the state would strike first at its enemies, often in a surprise attack, in order to better protect its assets from external aggression. Historically, the most famous example of this would be the 1967 Six Day War between Israel and the Arab states of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Israel's lack of strategic depth<sup>12</sup> led their military thinkers to conclude that the only way to survive and to avoid being overwhelmed is to strike first and to strike in such a way that incapacitates their enemies.<sup>13</sup> This is indeed what had happened in the 1967 campaign, where the Israeli Air Force incapacitated its Arab counterparts (despite being numerically inferior) and established air superiority.

Indeed, strategic planning that does not serve the purpose of permanently mitigating threats is rather useless and mis-applied. The Israelis, for example, were severely lacking in water security; most of its freshwater comes from the Jordan River and Lake Tiberias. These water bodies have their source in Mount Hermon, which straddles the border between Lebanon and Syria. From Mount Hermon flows the Hasbani River and the rest of the waters of the Golan Heights. This explains the Israeli's strategic interests in the Golan Heights and Mount Hermon, and why they have not let go of the land despite giving back the Sinai Peninsula. In fact, despite the fact that Israel has succeeded in adopting water desalination in pursuit of its water security, it is only increasing its Jewish settlements in the Golan Heights. The Golan Heights offer it greater strategic depth, water resources, and is only 30km away from Damascus. Here territorial expansion seems to be the most strategic choice for this state, despite the presence of other, more peaceful options.

In brief, the state's defensive strategy represents the summation of its contingency planning in the face of all possible threats against its assets – this is a comprehensive plan that includes specified means of execution as well as possible preemptive action for the purpose of risk mitigation and asset protection. It is all encompassing, and the presence of a well-developed Defense Strategy plan can mean the prevention or at least near total mitigation of catastrophe. Geopolitical considerations and power projection capabilities tend to be some of the most deterministic factors of a state's defensive policy; the former determines the state's assets and threats to those assets, while the latter determines the extent to which mitigative measures can be taken.

For the above reasons, and so much more, the presence of a Defense Strategy policy is integral to the functioning of a state, as it helps to preserve it from foreign influence and aggression. Defensive strategies also serve to direct policymaking and foreign relations, while helping the state cope with all kinds of disasters natural or otherwise in a timely and mitigative fashion. In today's rapidly changing world, with initial conditions always in flux, it is best to periodically revise state's defensive strategy in regular intervals independent of other factors related to internal politics (and whatever gridlock might accompany such politics).

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<sup>12</sup> Israeli controlled territory is minimally 15km wide.

<sup>13</sup> (Stein & Tanter, 1980).



### **III. The Lebanese Republic: Defense Strategy**

The defensive strategy is a landmark concept in Lebanese politics and has its place consecrated in legislation. However, the presence of geopolitical factors as well as the incessant Lebanese internal political gridlock has negatively affected the drafting or adoption of a national defensive strategy.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, it would be best to introduce the legal mechanisms with which a national defense strategy in Lebanon is to be adopted, before describing the current status of the state's defensive strategy. Finally, Lebanon's geopolitical status will be analyzed, its assets defined, and its threats assessed, to propose an incomplete national defensive strategy. While it may be surprising as to why one would bother even going through the trouble of such an endeavor only to leave it incomplete, the truth is that there exists one major variable in Lebanon, which neither can safely be determined to be a threat nor an asset. This particular variable, i.e., Hezbollah, has the chameleonic ability to be both, and the determinant factor is not inherent to it but dependent on negotiations and political agreements reached with that variable by the Lebanese State.

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<sup>14</sup> (Al Ahmar, 2020).

## **A. Legal Mechanisms**

The adoption of a national defensive strategy is not limited to common political sense but has been mandated constitutionally. The Lebanese Constitution<sup>15</sup> in Article 49 states that the President of the Republic presides over the Supreme Defense Council, a body tasked with the execution of the state's defensive policies as defined by the Council of Ministers.<sup>16</sup> This includes the modes of execution, as the Supreme Defense Council is given prerogatives to interfere in education, the economy (especially its fiscal, agricultural, industrial, and commercial sectors), public healthcare, and others. The Supreme Defense Council apportions tasks to each ministry and oversees the planning and execution of such plans. For example, it is the Ministry of Defense's task *inter alia* to oversee the protection of the borders.<sup>17</sup>

The Constitution further mandates that the Council of Ministers in conjunction with the Prime Minister must decide and are responsible for executing the state's national policies, including its defensive policy.<sup>18</sup>

To reiterate, it could be said that it is the duty of the Council of Ministers, and that of the Prime Minister, to draft and implement the state's defensive policy. This is sound constitutional thought, as the matter of Defense Strategy is an executive matter. Furthermore, it is the role of the Supreme Defense Council to oversee the planning and execution of the minutest details regarding the defensive strategy. This council is presided over by the President of the Republic.

This is the type of power sharing and dilution that has been constitutionalized by the Taef Agreement, as prior to the Taef the matter of Defense Strategy would have been left to the office of the President. The older model represents a sounder arrangement; the President's term is a non-renewable six years, and so each successive President would have the chance to revisit and revise his predecessor's national policy, including matters of Defense Strategy. Currently, that is not the case, as it has been delegated to the council of ministers as a whole. *De facto*, and this is especially true a post-Taef Lebanon, the fact that the council is composed of a large number of ministers (reaching up to 30) all of whom were selected on the basis of national unity aggravates decision making and promotes a lack of decision taking, as the council of ministers would then represent a miniaturized version of the Legislative Assembly with all its contradictory opinions. For example, in 2008, there were as many as five camps each with a different opinion on what Lebanon's defensive strategy should look like.<sup>19</sup> Currently there exists no clear constitutional or legislative incentive that mandates the periodic renewal of the nation's defensive strategy, something that must be rectified. Furthermore, it must be noted that Lebanon is bound in its policymaking by the international agreements with which it has bound itself. Notably, in terms of Defense Strategy, these most prominently include the 1949 Armistice Agreement, the Charter of the United Nations (which prohibits acts of aggression and prioritizes the maintenance of international peace and justice over national interests), and the 1950 Arab League Joint Defense and Economic Co-Operation Treaty. Lebanon's treaties with Syria are similarly binding.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The Constitution of the Lebanese Republic, 1990.

<sup>16</sup> National Defense Law #102/1983.

<sup>17</sup> (Yaghi, 2015).

<sup>18</sup> The Constitution of the Lebanese Republic, 1990. Art. 64-65.

<sup>19</sup> (Hoteit, 2008) and (Hanna, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> (Aboultaif, 2016).

## B. Current Lebanese Defensive Strategy

The Lebanese Republic does not currently have a comprehensive defensive strategy owing to mitigating factors that include a lack of understanding of the term. President Michel Aoun, for example, published a paper titled *A Brief Study of Defense Strategy: A Resistant People* that limited the application of defensive strategies to military matters, despite the fact that he acknowledged its wider scope.<sup>21</sup> The only non-military asset defined in that paper worth protecting seems to be the concept of national unity, something he deemed to be a “necessity for Lebanon”.<sup>22</sup> This sentiment was parroted by foreign authors too, some of whom dubbed it “Lebanese Exceptionalism”.<sup>23</sup>

However, half-hearted efforts have been undertaken by the political caste to implement a national defense strategy. The first discussions began in 2006, when the political parties discussed important issues such as the Palestinian armed presence in addition to Hezbollah’s arms.<sup>24</sup> The main dispute, and because of which the political parties have not yet been able to implement a defensive strategy, is Hezbollah’s paramilitary division. Hezbollah, as vocally admitted by its Secretary General, is funded by the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>25</sup> Therefore there exists at least two armed forces in Lebanon, the legitimate Lebanese Armed Forces and Hezbollah, for whom there exists no legal framework outside of the Ministerial Statement.<sup>26</sup> Hezbollah’s forces are not funded, controlled, trained, nor operated by the Lebanese State; whatever loyalties it may have to the Lebanese Republic are tangential and not inherent to the organizational architecture itself. Where the Lebanese Armed Forces swear their loyalty to the Lebanon<sup>27</sup> and are under the command of the President who swore to the constitution as well,<sup>28</sup> Hezbollah’s forces do not apparently swear any such oath. This means that for all intents and purposes, Hezbollah is an alien armed force on Lebanese territory despite being formed, led, and staffed by Lebanese members<sup>29</sup> and so here lies the problem – is Hezbollah an asset, or is it a threat to Lebanon? The answer to this question is what determines Hezbollah’s place within the state’s defensive strategy, and whether Lebanon should consider it an asset to be relied upon in its defense, or a threat to be neutralized in pursuit of its security. This debate in particular is what has stifled the implementation of a national defense strategy, especially one that is all encompassing. United Nations Security Resolutions 1559<sup>30</sup> and 1701<sup>31</sup> further polarized political opinions in Lebanon, with some parties calling for the immediate disarmament of all armed forces inside Lebanon, including Hezbollah, and with others rejecting the Security Council resolutions.<sup>32</sup> Hezbollah, too, has done little to wholeheartedly assure the Lebanese public. On the one hand, it helps fight terrorist cells within Lebanon; on the other, it enters Beirut in arms.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>21</sup> (Aoun, 2008, p. 1).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> (Picard, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> (Hoteit, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> (Rafizadeh, 2020).

<sup>26</sup> Issued at the beginning of every government’s tenure. البيان الوزاري

<sup>27</sup> The Officer corps swears this upon graduation.

<sup>28</sup> Article 50, the Constitution of the Republic of Lebanon.

<sup>29</sup> Because its interests, funding, and ideology are not controlled by the Lebanese State. Hezbollah can conduct operations without first consulting the Lebanese State, as seen in its Syrian intervention.

<sup>30</sup> S/RES/1559 (2004), ss. 2, 3, 4.

<sup>31</sup> S/RES/1701 (2006), ss. 3, 8, 10.

<sup>32</sup> (Hoteit, 2008).

<sup>33</sup> Aرسال incursions 2014; 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2008.

The truth is that now more than ever Lebanon is sorely missing a defensive strategy, being beset with hostile intentions on all sides from within and without, and yet a solution for the foreseeable future remains unlikely.

## C. Proposition for a Defensive Strategy

To properly assess the state of security of the Republic of Lebanon, one must first define its assets in both kind and degree before determining threat levels and the optimal means of defense. This is in essence a geopolitical case study of Lebanon, with respect to fundamental forces both internal, regional, and international, without which there can be no defensive strategy.<sup>34</sup> However, the matter of Hezbollah will be left unattended, as even without that crucial element there is still much to discuss and determine with respect to a defensive strategy. Furthermore, the modes of execution of such a plan will be similarly left undiscussed – to do otherwise would require firsthand information of the state’s finances and capabilities, notwithstanding an official classification of Hezbollah.

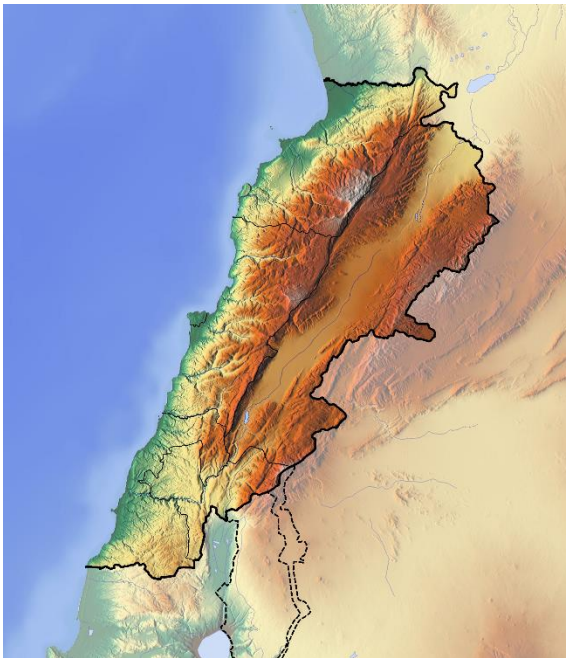


Figure 1. Topographical & Political Map. Source: Wikimedia

### 1. Geography

Lebanon’s geography is unique and presents many opportunities and challenges. Lebanon is defined by Mount Lebanon and its immediate surroundings, the mountain range extending from the Homs Gap to the Upper Galilee in a north-east to south-west fashion. This mountain is around 200 km in length and reaches inhospitable heights of up to three thousand meters. Mount Lebanon can be said to have two [prominent] peaks, the Black Peak and Mt. Sannine. Lebanon is said to be a mountain falling into the sea; across it lies the Anti-Lebanon range which form the natural eastern border with Syria. To the north, the border is defined by the Orontes River Valley, the Homs Gap, and the Great River [*Nahr el-Kebir*]. The southern borders are not properly delineated, and as a result, negotiations are being carried out with the Israelis for border demarcation. Between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon lies the fertile Beqaa Valley, an elevated plateau of around nine-hundred meters altitude. Lebanon lacks any

navigable waterways, which along with its rugged terrain, has complicated even economic development.

Lebanon’s heartland can easily be determined to be the administrative provinces of Mount Lebanon and Beirut. Beirut, a primate city, has at least two million inhabitants, a number that represents anywhere between a third and one half of the total population. Population densities in Mount Lebanon tend to be much higher with greater degrees of urbanization and development than the rest of the country. Furthermore, this is an area with high water security, as a result of the many groundwater basins in the seaward face of the mountain.

<sup>34</sup> (Hanna, 2008)

Lebanon’s geography offers many advantages, but equally presents the strategist with just as many problems. First, the state’s main population centers, its heartland and secondary cities like Tripoli and Sidon, are on the coast or on the seaward mountain slopes. This puts the Lebanese state at high naval risk. Should Lebanon find itself in a confrontation with a naval power, there is little to do to stop blockade and bombardment. It would even be difficult to stop an amphibious landing and assault. For this reason, Lebanon must forge strong ties, or even alliances, with a leading naval power. Historically, this has been the United States – already its 6<sup>th</sup> fleet engaged in military conflict in Lebanon in 1958 (in a Marine amphibious invasion) and in 1983 when it bombarded the Chouf area as part of the Mountain War. France too has a blue-water navy capable of maintaining at the very least Mediterranean sea-lanes. Another problem presented by geography is the lack of strategic depth – Lebanon can be as narrow as 32 kilometers.



Figure 2. The Crusader States in 1135 AD. The Kingdom of Jerusalem ends at Nahr Kalb. Source: Wikimedia

Even so, potential invaders will have a hard time reaching Lebanon, as a more than proper defense could be mounted. Any invader from the east would have to contend for the Beqaa valley, and even if the Beqaa Valley were lost, the invaders would still have much to contend with before reaching the heartland. Mount Lebanon’s eastern slopes are quite steep and not conducive to the passage of arms and presents the defenders with a distinct strategic advantage – that of the high ground. Furthermore, invaders from the North would similarly be further frustrated from any attempts to hold the heartland. Tripoli is an urban environment and taking the city would be no easy feat, furthermore, even if the city is taken, and the north falls, there still remains the obstacle of the Chekka; this geographical feature has long frustrated invading armies. However, it must be noted that with modern technology, bypassing Chekka will be a difficult but entirely feasible task, as such, the defenders must hold it well and hold it fiercely. Finally, the one invasion route from which Lebanon is

entirely vulnerable is the south, as there exist no geographical features that can help stop or deter invading armies. The only such feature worth mentioning is Nahr Kalb valley, which has historically delineated the most northern extent of southern powers, as evidenced by the multiple

stelae and other inscriptions in that valley by men such as Rameses II. It must be noted that should such a case befall Lebanon, Beirut would essentially be forsaken, and so this is not a truly realistic scenario owing to Beirut's primacy. The fall of Beirut would also mean the fall of the Beqaa as there is no way for the people of the Beqaa to resist a northbound advancement. However, the heartland still has some hope of holding out, as the Nahr Kalb valley can prove to be a tough obstacle to go around. This has actually happened before during the Crusades. The border between the Crusader states of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the county of Tripoli was indeed the Nahr Kalb valley; when the Kingdom fell to Saladin in the Second Crusade, the County of Tripoli remained unaffected. In fact, discounting Cyprus and Malta, the County of Tripoli would be the last Crusader State to fall, only doing so in the 1289 siege to the Mamluks. This is certainly a testament to its defensibility; although diplomacy did play a role in its longevity, such as Tripolitan cooperation with the Mamluks against the Mongols in the Battle of Ain Jalut (1260), the County was for the longest time the last remaining Crusader Bastion, and so subject to great hostility. It is this defensibility that had helped them last for so long. Similarly, in today's age, when disregarding the force multipliers of air, space, and sea, a fair portion of the Lebanese heartland is rather defensible from a southern land invasion. Beirut itself is an obstacle – urban warfare is one of the most lethal and time-consuming forms of warfare. Simply put, taking a city of two million people from determined defenders is tough to achieve.

However, it must be noted that Lebanon remains vulnerable to assault from air, sea, and space. For example, in the 1982 Lebanon War, the IAF and IDF actually used Lebanon's geography, especially its deep valleys, to surprise the Syrians in their fortified positions with assaults from the air.<sup>35</sup> Otherwise, Lebanon's geography is well suited to protect its heartland from ground assault, and the proximity to foreign capitals indicates that should a force with sufficient power projection capabilities operate under the Patronage of the Lebanese State, it would be in a good position to make demands against its neighbors.

Speaking of its neighbors, Lebanon is quite unlucky in that department. To the East and North, Lebanon is bordered by the Syrian Arab Republic. To the south, Lebanon is bordered by the Zionist regime. These are possibly the two worst neighbors to have. These two nations both have a bloody history in Lebanon, contributing much grief to the Lebanese, occupying the land and oppressing the people. Whereas the Zionists have caused much destruction in the South up to the capital, the Syrians are in some sense not much better, assassinating many of Lebanon's political and communal leaders, holding Lebanese citizens in Syrian prisons, and in general being an occupying force post Taef agreement. In fact, Syria only recognized Lebanon's independence and sovereignty in 2008, that is, three years after the Cedar Revolution. To put things into perspective – Syria entered Lebanon in arms in 1976 at the request of the representatives of the Lebanese Front, with US mediation, it left in 2005, and recognized Lebanon as a sovereign nation in 2008. Syria was involved militarily in Lebanon for 29 years, and for that entire time, did not recognize Lebanese sovereignty and independence. This is not an issue restricted to the Assad regime, but to the Syrian national political psyche.

In brief, Lebanon's geography is a double-edged sword with a multitude of geopolitical and military implications, both good and bad. It is up to wise policymakers to make the most with the hand that we have been dealt. So far, generations of Lebanese policymakers have failed to do so, which is unfortunate.

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<sup>35</sup> (Sayigh, 1983).

## 2. Military

“Even in this time of downsizing, we must retain capable military forces, for the world remains unpredictable and well-armed.” – Dick Cheney.<sup>36</sup>

The Lebanese Armed Forces is itself one of the most prominent handicaps facing the implementation of a National Defense Strategy. When President Fouad Chehab took over the responsibility of leading the army in the 1940s, the Lebanese Armed Forces numbered a total of only 3,500 individuals, including its officer corps and fighting personnel.<sup>37</sup> It has of course expanded significantly since then, but remains rather underfunded – its position and moral standing is further compromised by the presence of armed militias on Lebanese soil.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, Lebanon’s military has a poor track record, mainly consisting of it being idle whenever it was most needed, especially in internal matters. In 1958, for example, the army under Fouad Chehab stood idly by while civil war tore Beirut apart; Chehab’s excuse has been noted down as precedent, because all subsequent instances of army inactivity use the same excuse, mainly, that it remains neutral for fear of mutiny and separatism.<sup>39</sup> The internal fragility of the army and the absence of a binding *Esprit de Corps* has rendered it hostage to Lebanon’s internal stability and is in this sense not a very useful tool for the implementation of the government’s designs. Similarly, this lack of *will* was present in President Frangieh’s 1973 incursion against the PLO and the Palestinian camps – politics played its role, and the army was recalled from its military ventures.<sup>40</sup> The long war of 1975 actually saw this threat come to fruition, with the army being split along sectarian lines for almost the entirety of the war.<sup>41</sup> The events of May 2008 also saw the Army standing idly by for tensions to calm down; in fact, their contribution to those events seems to be limited to protecting the Christian areas from the conflict’s spillover.



Figure 3. Independence Day flyover Harissa, Lebanese Air Force c. 1964-1967.

The Army did however participate in some conflicts, notably post Cedar Revolution. The LAF entered conflict against Islamists in Nahr el-Bared in 2007 and in 2014 in defense of Aarsal, among other instances. Despite this, it must be noted that the army’s power projection capabilities remain minute, with a culmination point barely outside of Lebanese borders. This has never been tested, and yet there appears to be no reason to believe otherwise. Regardless,

Lebanon maintains only a token air force and navy, with outdated equipment, and cannot be relied upon for the accomplishment of any task in the case of conflict. In the 1960s, Lebanon did have a state-of-the-art air force, as evidenced by the attached photo from an Independence Day parade flyover Harissa. Policymakers must adopt measures to increase the army’s *esprit de corps* and its coherence before even discussing budgeting matters or the level of armament.

<sup>36</sup> (Cheney, 1993)

<sup>37</sup> (Aallo, 2018).

<sup>38</sup> (Picard, 2011)

<sup>39</sup> (Sorby, 2000, p. 93).

<sup>40</sup> (Zamir, 1980).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

### 3. Water Security

Lebanon is the region's water tower; it is then a testament to ill-governance that this state is facing water security problems. The CIA Factbook recognizes this, calling Lebanon a water-surplus state in a water-deficit region.<sup>42</sup> Lebanon has always had more water resources per capita thanks to its proximity to the sea coupled with its topography – its natural aquifers (the permeable limestone of Mount Lebanon) capture rainfall which then becomes either groundwater or one of Lebanon's many rivers and streams.<sup>43</sup> In fact, Lebanon has at least 12 notable internal rivers, of which the Litani is the longest and most important agriculturally and in terms of water resources. However, two rivers allow Lebanon the right to be dubbed a regional water tower, namely the Orontes and Hasbani rivers. The former springs in the region of Baalbek-Hermel and runs north past the Orontes River Valley into Homs and Hama in Syria before emptying near Antioch in the Hatay province of the Turkish Republic. The latter springs from Mount Hermon, whose springs also water the Golan Heights, and goes on to water the Sea of Galilee, from which flows the Jordan River before finally becoming the Dead Sea.

In short, all of the Levant's waters originate in Lebanon, and none of these waters are governed by international treaty or convention. Even the Barada spring, which waters and sustains Damascus, originates in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains. In a world where climate change induced drought is becoming a present reality and future concern, Lebanon must properly plan and administer its vast water resources.<sup>44</sup>

Lebanon is indeed both at risk from its water resources and in a position to exploit it. Foreign aggression is a distinct possibility and Lebanon's neighbors will not hesitate to exploit Lebanon's water resources for their own benefit; indeed, Israel has already done so multiple times throughout its history, both threatening to bomb Lebanon should it dam the Hasbani and attempting to secure the Litani in its multiple invasions.<sup>45</sup> Syria too presents Lebanon might attempt to exploit Lebanon's water, especially in light of Turkish attempts to monopolize the Euphrates and their struggle with the Kurds; should the Syrians find the Euphrates closed to them, the path of least resistance will lead through Lebanon.<sup>46</sup> Lebanon must move to implement international legal instruments to protect its interests, and at the same time prepare for military confrontation in case the legal framework breaks down.<sup>47</sup> Water security is after all a prerequisite to peace and diplomacy, its absence invariably leads to war.

Lebanon's position also presents it with a trump card of sorts in its international relations should it properly protect its assets. Lebanon can in effect threaten to cut off Syria and Israel (and Jordan) from their natural water sources, the Orontes and Hasbani, through either diverting the river, building dams, or other means. Should Lebanon be able to withstand the diplomatic and military fallback from such events, or to at least appear to be able to do so, then it can gain much in negotiations.

Regardless of the international implications of Lebanon's water systems, it must better manage its resources and become water-sufficient at the very least, and at best to export its freshwater. Before that happens (through good governance), nothing else will matter.

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<sup>42</sup> (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

<sup>43</sup> (MoEW & UNDP, 2014).

<sup>44</sup> (Kanaan & Abou Hamze, 2021).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



Water Security must be prioritized in Lebanon’s defensive strategies as its lack has the most potential of disrupting peace in the region.

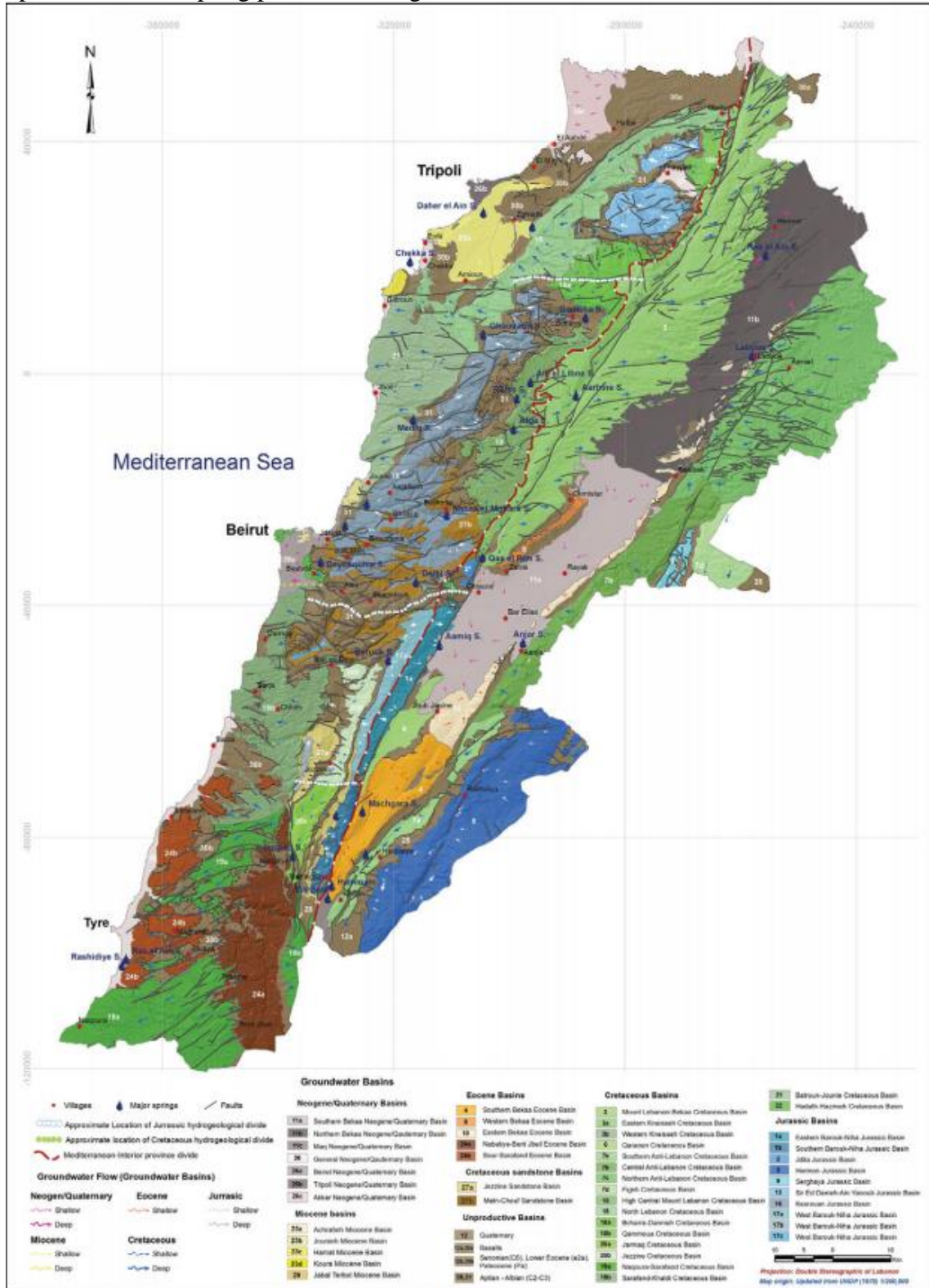


Figure 4. Groundwater Basins in Lebanon. Source: (MoEW & UNDP, 2014).

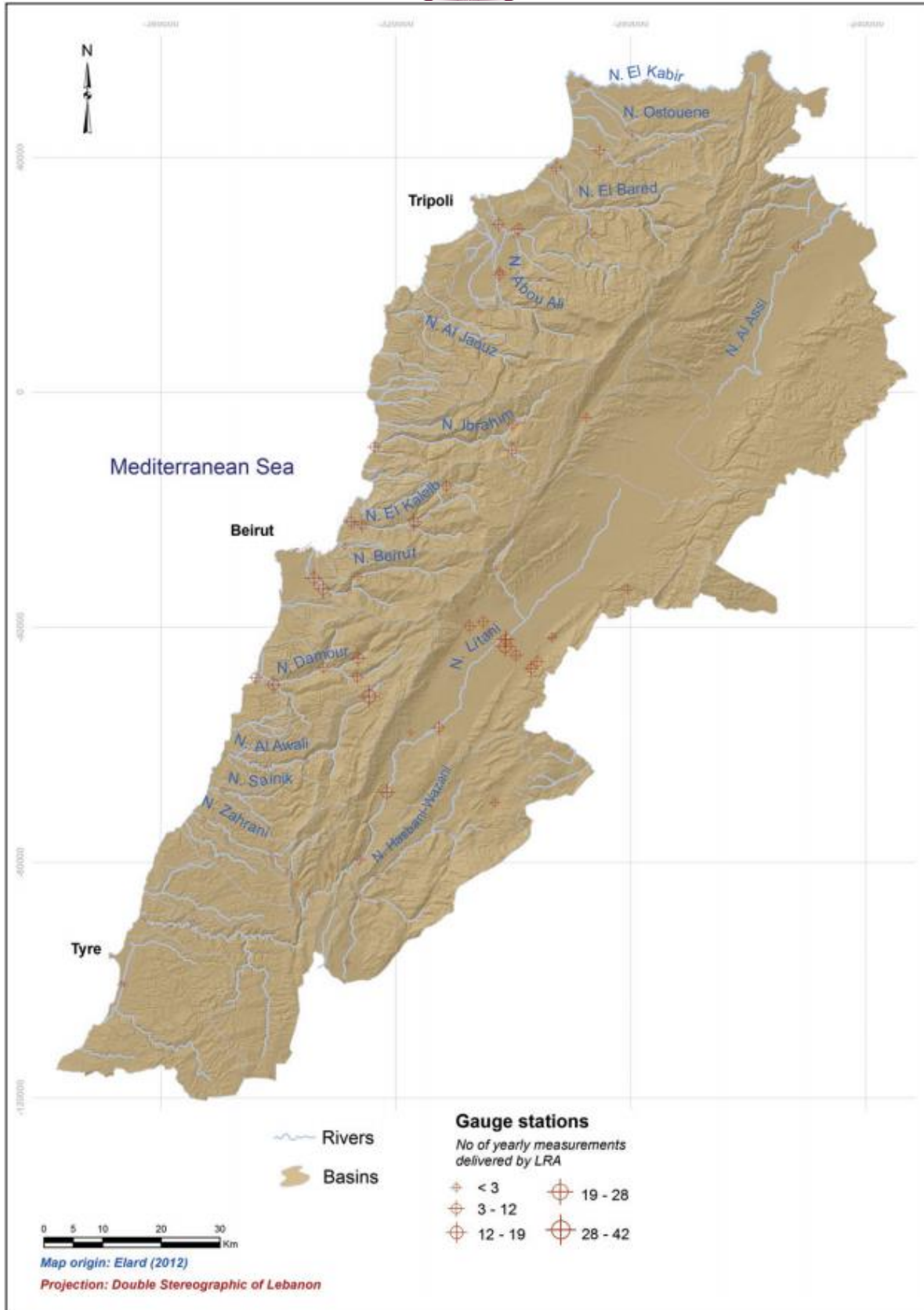


Figure 5. Lebanon's Rivers & Gauge Stations. Source: (MoEW & UNDP, 2014).

#### 4. Economy

The economy is the vehicle through which political ambitions are realized. Without a strong and robust national economy, one that is capable of withstanding foreign blows and malign intentions, the strategist has little hope of asserting geopolitical rights and aspirations on the regional stage, let alone the international arena.

Lebanon's economy is in shambles because it was built to be in shambles. This is the monetary architecture in which we have existed for so long. However, it need not be that way. Discussing monetary stability only, the Lebanon of the 1950s and 1960s was a case study in good economic policy and statesmanship. Lebanon was at one point the fourth most prosperous (i.e., fastest growing) economy after Switzerland, West Germany, and the United States.

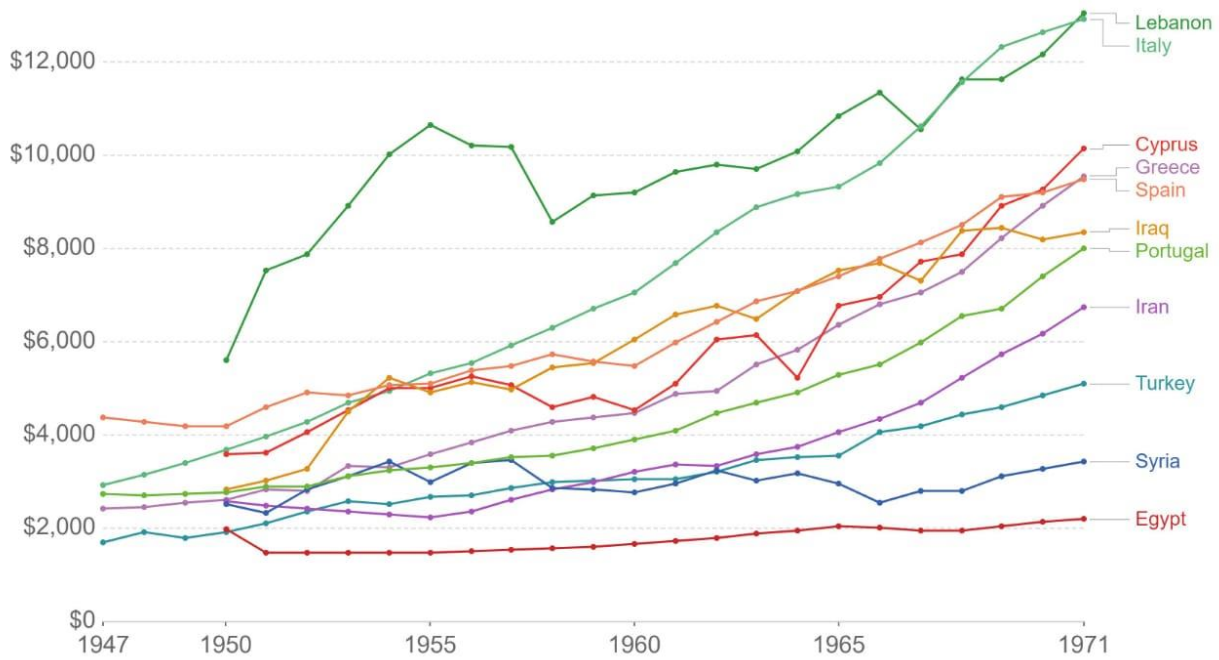


Furthermore, Lebanon was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of GDP per Capita in 1955, ahead of Sweden but just behind the UK. In fact, Lebanon had a higher standard of living than France, Germany, Spain, Italy, etc. all of whom we would consider to be “first-world countries”. In fact, for much of the time in the decades leading up to the 1970s, Lebanon was leading the pack by a wide margin. The dips in GDP per capita, most prominently in 1958 and 1967, represent the Civil War and the Palestinian influx following the Six Day War. The Lebanese were by far the wealthiest citizens in the region, ahead of the citizens of the GCC by a wide margin.

### GDP per capita, 1947 to 1971

Our World in Data

GDP per capita adjusted for price changes over time (inflation) and price differences between countries – it is measured in international-\$ in 2011 prices.



Source: Maddison Project Database (2018) OurWorldInData.org/economic-growth • CC BY  
 Note: These series are adjusted for price differences between countries using multiple benchmark years, and are therefore suitable for cross-country comparisons of income levels at different points in time.

Figure 6. GDP/capita across time.



Figure 7. Source Unkown.

At the moment, Lebanon can take simple steps to mitigate its economic meltdown and to strengthen the state's finances. Disregarding corruption or any extravagant measures to restore economic stability, fundamental steps can be taken to improve the economic situation, but they are deeply political. The electricity deficit is estimated to be \$3bn annually, while lost revenue due to cross-border smuggling with Syria represents a loss of around \$4bn annually.<sup>48</sup> These alone, if fixed, can turn and become a profit for the state (especially the electricity sector, as it can become a source of revenue in the hundreds of millions per annum). Lebanon's public debt is estimated to be in the margin of \$100bn (plus or minus), so just these two steps can pull Lebanon out of its current predicament in a few years. Furthermore, it has become common knowledge that tax collection outside the capital and some cazas of Mount Lebanon remains pitiable, in fact it is almost non-existent. Taxes need to be better collected across the entire territory of the Lebanese state.

The threats to Lebanon's economy are from both internal and external stability, it is then best that we neutralize all internal threats before addressing external ones. The above assessment represents some of the most fundamental steps that could be taken for the Lebanese state to rectify its economic malpractice; they are not brilliant solutions, because they are not meant to be. They are only the most basic steps that need to be addressed before further planning and reassessment take place. In analogous terms, one does not address marriage before going on the first date.

## 5. Human Capital

The Lebanese people are by far Lebanon's greatest asset. Ingenuous, entrepreneurial, and savvy, it is the duty of the State to protect these citizens through any means necessary – threats to Lebanon's human capital can come from a variety of sources, but this paper will focus on healthcare and immigration.

COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of attributing strategic thought to the possibility of pandemics ravaging populations. The state must in its defensive policy determine a proper national health policy that properly addresses action plans in the event of a national health crisis. Threats need not be natural, as despite the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons by the international laws of war,<sup>49</sup> Lebanon's neighbors have cultivated a reputation for flouting international law. In fact, the Zionists are a non-signatory, while the Syrian Arab Republic has not internally ratified the convention despite being a signatory. This puts Lebanon at risk in the future of being subject to such attacks, regardless of whether or not these states currently have the will or ability to perform such an aggression – as long as these states remain unbound by the convention, Lebanon is at biological risk.

Few things are as steadfast as Lebanese immigration, wherein Lebanese would leave their country for opportunities abroad. This is a fact – whether or not it is a threat, or an asset, remains a matter of policy. For one, the 'brain drain' is detrimental to our internal constitution as a populace, but even that brings with it the perk of expat remittances to the country. However, one must note that the Lebanese in general tend to immigrate to the leading western nations such as Australia, North America, and Europe (particularly France and Scandinavia). The Lebanese diaspora there has a profound influence on the upper echelons of society, with many Lebanese or of Lebanese origin people occupying public positions and enjoying a high profile. Carlos Ghosn

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<sup>48</sup> (Boulos, 2020).

<sup>49</sup> (1972). Convention on the prohibition of the development, production, and stockpiling of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and on their destruction.

is a prominent example, but he is not at all the only one. In Trump's administration, for example, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper and Secretary of Health Alex Azar were both of Lebanese origin (specifically hailing from the Maronite and Greek Orthodox communities). The Lebanese influence in West Africa and South America is also nothing to slight. Venezuela alone boasts many Lebanese ministers, including Tarek William Saab, Tarek Aissami, Henry Allup, Elias Jaua, and others. The examples are manifold, what remains is what to do about it.

Lebanon as a rather small nation must pivot its efforts and protect itself through soft power and international diplomacy. The establishment of a Lebanese lobby in the capitals of the world's powers can become an historical breakthrough for the promotion of Lebanon's interests, including the creation of a diplomatic shield woven from soft power for the national defense and security of Lebanon. The Lebanese diaspora, especially the first and second generations, are entirely enthusiastic about Lebanon, as evidenced by the international protests in support of the October 17 Revolution. Later generations of the diaspora can be persuaded of this enthusiasm should the Lebanese state make tangible steps to court them.

The Lebanese people themselves, despite being the state's biggest asset, have also proven themselves to be its greatest and most incessant source of danger and threat. It is entirely remarkable that Lebanon despite only gaining independence in 1943 had already had two civil wars by 1975. The lack of internal cohesion of the Lebanese people is itself the greatest threat to the Lebanese state's ambitions and must be accounted for in a national defense policy – a house divided cannot stand. Realistically, however, this will never be accounted for within a national defense policy no matter how many times it would be iterated, because these same politicians who are drafting the defensive strategy are themselves party to the lack of internal cohesion and would never suffer a defensive strategy be drafted against certain populations in Lebanon (which the politician in question might be an adherent of). However, it does not preclude the inclusion of such a provision in more general terms, and at least the finding of solutions to strengthen national cohesion without recourse to corrective action in the case of communal separatism, mutiny, rebellion, etc.

## **6. Intelligence**

This is the information age and the protection of that information, sometimes called data, is integral to any defensive policy. From the perspective of national defense, data can be classified as being either private (i.e., pertaining to citizens) or state data. The realm of intelligence is not limited to data protection, but also to counterintelligence for the protection of the state's coherence against threats to its internal stability, such as but not limited to terrorism.

With respect to Terrorism and other threats to the peace, Lebanon is no stranger to terrorist attacks and insurrection, as the freshness of the event has caused it to be imprinted in the nation's collective memory. Indeed, despite the fact that Lebanon lacks a national defense policy, its security apparatus has not neglected to address the threats from terrorism and have actively taken preemptive action to reduce the threat of terrorist acts on the security of Lebanon. These actions have included counterintelligence operations for the objective of finding and neutralizing terrorist cells before they commit their crimes. The actions of the state's security and intelligence apparatus are truly laudable and effective – the frequency of terrorist action against the state have greatly decreased. Although this could be attributed to the calming of events in Syria, with the near total defeat of the Islamic State and its allies, the Internal Security Forces did much to protect Lebanon regardless of regional developments.

However, the state's protection of its digital assets remains pitiable. Little has been done to protect our nation's cyberspace despite the army's acknowledgement of the importance of cybersecurity, with such figures as Dr. Mona Ashkar Jabbour calling for a special cybersecurity defensive strategy.<sup>50</sup> The state's data as well as the private data of the citizens must be protected through legislation and active security practices against hostile targets. The Israelis are infamous for their mastery of cyberwarfare and represent the greatest threat to Lebanon's cybersecurity. Lebanon must strive to achieve cyberparity with its regional rivals. This is a reasonably attainable objective considering Lebanon's human capital, it just needs state direction, cultivation, and leadership to attain that goal.

Even so, Lebanon remains vulnerable to traditional intelligence operations. The Mossad are a world class intelligence services, in league with the likes of the CIA, and have a vested interest in infiltrating Lebanon's intelligence infrastructure. The Syrian Arab Republic, too, has had a history of intelligence infiltration, especially in the era of and directly following the occupation.<sup>51</sup> Even the great powers have been known to station their operatives in Beirut. Miles Copeland, father of famous drummer Steward Copeland, was a famous CIA operative stationed in Beirut who had frequent meetings with Egyptian President Nasser and worked to disrupt Syrian stability.<sup>52</sup>

However, Lebanon had once placed a special importance on counterintelligence, especially in the era of President Chehab, who founded the Second Bureau. This was a branch of army intelligence and counterintelligence comparable to the G2 of the US Army staff.<sup>53</sup> This branch caught Shulamit Kishik-Cohen in 1961, three years before the reveal of Eli Cohen, and was considered a major success as that was one of the first times a Middle Eastern authority had managed to catch a Mossad Agent, if not the first.<sup>54</sup> This bureau was disbanded by President Frangieh; the establishment of a modern intelligence agency, or the strengthening of current state intelligentsia, might be enough to protect Lebanon from hostile intelligence operations, but in any case it should be the very first step taken towards doing so.

## 7. Oil & Gas

Lebanon, surprisingly, has the potential to become an energy powerhouse. This is due to the discovery of energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean basin, which has led to an energy race in the region. Once again, geopolitics takes the front seat, and this asset is under threat from Lebanon's neighbors.

Disregarding the race for the East-West pipelines, Lebanon can start securing its interests by at the very least engaging in and finalizing border talks with *both* its neighbors. Already negotiations with Israel are undergoing, but Lebanon, for example, has not joined the East Mediterranean Gas Forum, because of Israeli involvement.<sup>55</sup> This represents a major misstep in Lebanese policymaking. Lebanon and Israel are already both party to the Mediterranean Union, notwithstanding the United Nations.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, Lebanon is already in talks with the Israelis for border demarcation, so the decision to omit Lebanon and to isolate it from international and

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<sup>50</sup> (Mansour, 2014).

<sup>51</sup> (Phares, 1994).

<sup>52</sup> (Eringer, 1986).

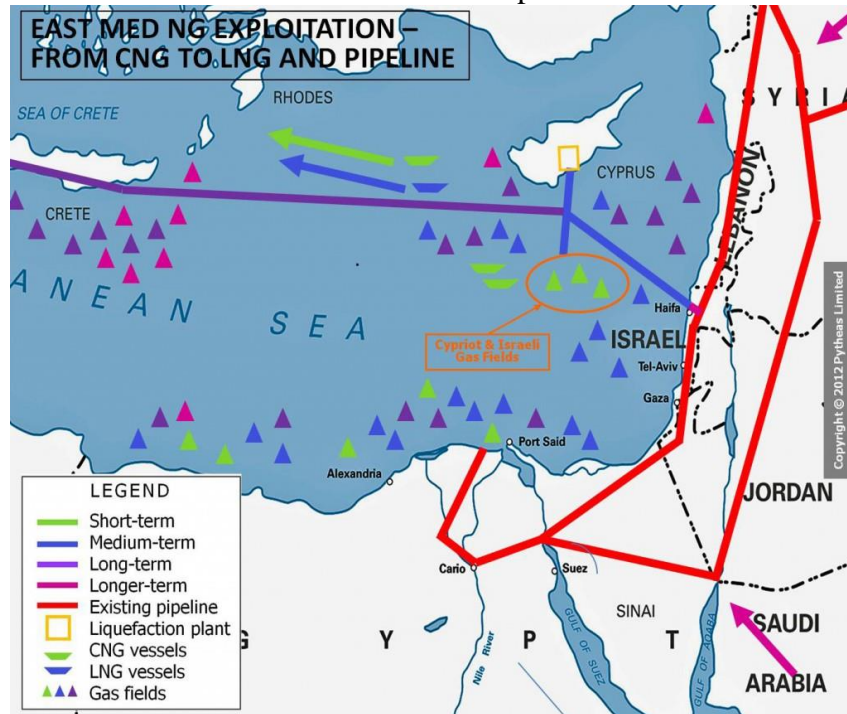
<sup>53</sup> (Phares, 1994).

<sup>54</sup> (Al Jazeera, 2017).

<sup>55</sup> (Zoghbi, 2020).

<sup>56</sup> (Sarraf, 2020).

regional energy forums is nonsensical and deterrent to national interests. Border talks with Israel must be concluded; one cannot protect and benefit from assets which have not been properly defined and over which there exists an international dispute.



Furthermore, the same applies to Lebanon’s northern border with the Syrian Arab Republic. Currently the border is defined by the natural boundary of the Great River, but rivers have been known to change course even if ever so slightly. Proper negotiations must be undertaken with borders demarcated irrespective of natural features or landmarks, because Syria will not hesitate to make use of any obfuscation to its own benefit in spite of Lebanese national interests.

Furthermore, Lebanon must use a measure of good diplomacy to position itself as a regional player in the energy sector of the Eastern Mediterranean. At the very least, if the state is unable to take a proactive role (and there does not appear to be a reason for that to be the case), then it must join the regional forums and conventions aimed at organizing such matters, notably, the EastMed Gas Forum, inter alia.

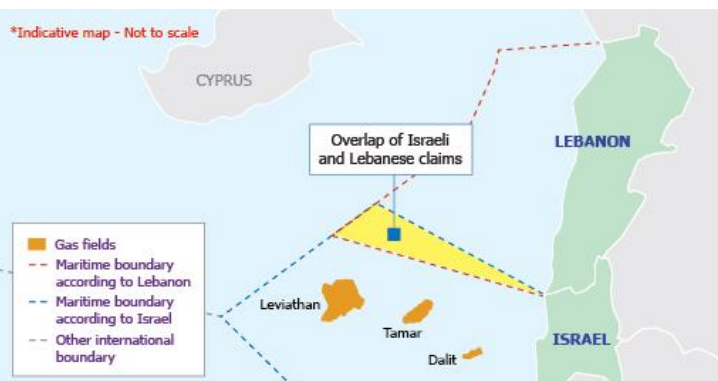
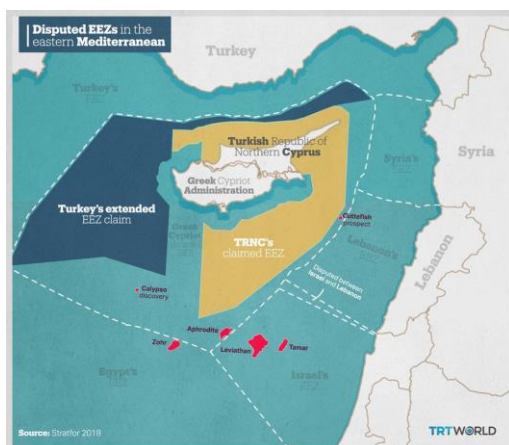






Figure 8. Source: Al Jazeera



## **IV. Conclusion**

Defense Strategy remains an integral part of statesmanship and must be one of the state's main concerns as its objective is to define the state's interests and to strategize methods of threat prevention, risk management, and asset protection. Unfortunately, this is an area of politicking that has been absent from contemporary Lebanese politics, and so Lebanon remains under unmitigated threat from both internal and external hostiles.

Regardless, no Defense Strategy plan is complete without raising the main political issue in Lebanon, that is, Hezbollah's arms and weaponry. Hezbollah's independent activities on the national, regional, and international planes have the potential to undermine or even sabotage state initiatives and efforts, whether diplomatic or otherwise.

Indeed, considering the above, it remains rather doubtful that Lebanon will at any time soon adopt a national defensive strategy, which is rather pitiable.

## V. Glossary

- Culmination Point: The culminating point in military strategy is the point at which a military force no longer is able to perform its operations.<sup>57</sup>
- Grand Strategy: the summation of the “strategic” [military] notion to encompass all hard and soft assets (diplomatic, economic, informational, etc.), from threats both internal and external, as well as how each would operate in both peacetime and war.
- Heartland: the most important part of a country (population, economy, water, etc.).
- Loss of Strength Gradient (LSG): [Effective] Military power is a function of distance.<sup>58</sup>
- National Security: The Security and defense of the military, economy, citizens, institutions, etc.
- Power Projection: The capacity to project [military, political, economic, et al.] force as a function of distance from the heartland, especially outside borders.
- Strategic Depth, Distance (time) from the heartland.
- Strategy: A plan and mode of execution for the attainment of long-term goals under uncertain, usually dynamic, conditions; decisions prioritized by value.
- Sea-lane: a maritime route that is regularly used by vessels.
- Counterintelligence: syn. Counterespionage, activities meant to prevent or foil spying by an enemy.
- Cyberspace: The modes of communication (i.e., data transfer) across computer networks.
- Cybersecurity: The application of technologies and methods for the protection of cyberspace.
- Cyberespionage: The exploitation of cyberspace to gain unauthorized information.

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<sup>57</sup> (Clausewitz, 1832).

<sup>58</sup> (Boulding, 1962).

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