

**Observation no: 90 (Arab Israeli War)**

**Country-year: Lebanon - 1947**

**1. Did the current regime come to power in a military coup?**

No.

The President of the Republic of Lebanon was elected in September 1943 and the country gained its total independence from France in the two months following the election.<sup>1</sup>

**2. Has the country ever experienced a military coup?**

No.<sup>2</sup>

The Lebanese army technically did not exist until the independence of the country on November 22, 1943.<sup>3</sup>

**3. Is the country's top leader a former military officer?**

No.

Bechara al Khoury, a Christian Maronite politician and leader of the pro-independence parliamentary Constitutionalist bloc was elected the first president of independent Lebanon in September 1943 and remained in power until his resignation in September 1952.<sup>4</sup>

**4. Are ethnic, sectarian, or racial criteria used to exclude segments of the population from the officer corps?**

Yes.

Adherence to sectarian quotas was part of the officer corps recruitment procedures. These quotas favored the Christian Maronites, Sunnis, and Shias. However, Christians were chosen to dominate the officer corps as well as the rank and file along with other minorities in the latter. This can be explained by the fact that the nascent armed forces of 1947 were the continuation of the French *Troupe Spéciale du Levant* that was mainly composed of indigenous Christians in the officer corps

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<sup>1</sup> Attié, Caroline. *Struggle in the Levant. Lebanon in the 1950's*. London & New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2004, pp.23-24.

<sup>2</sup> Verified in Luttwak, Edward. *Coup d'État. A practical Handbook*. Table II Basic List of Coups and Attempted Coups, 1945-78. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979, p. 205.

<sup>3</sup> Attié, Caroline, p.263.

<sup>4</sup> Attié, Caroline, pp.20-30.

and of other minorities in the lower ranks. The Sunni Muslims, however, boycotted the *Troupes Spéciales* because of their opposition to both the French and to an independent Lebanon separated from the Sunni Arab world. Consequently, they were largely unrepresented in the armed forces.<sup>5</sup>

**5. Are there strict ideological requirements for entry into the senior officer corps?**

No.

The Lebanese armed forces allegedly represented more than any other institutions the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon.<sup>6</sup> It adhered to the sectarian Lebanese system established by the 1943 National Pact and was supposed to remain neutral at the political level.<sup>7</sup>

**6. Is party membership required for entry into the senior officer corps?**

No.

Fouad Shihab, the commander of the Lebanese Army, a French educated Christian Maronite, insisted on the professionalism of the army and not on its politicization, contrary to regional trends.<sup>8</sup>

**7. Does military training involve extensive political education or ideological indoctrination?**

No.

I cannot find evidence of this in the major histories already cited.

**8. Has the military been used to repress internal dissent in the last five years?**

No.

In the early years, the armed forces remained small in size and this was due to a political will to prevent the army to intervene at the government level.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> McLaurin, R.D. *Lebanon and Its Army: Past, Present, and Future*. In *The Emergence of a New Lebanon: Fantasy or Reality?*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1984, pp. 82-83.

<sup>6</sup> McLaurin, p. 80.

<sup>7</sup> Beshara, Adel. *Lebanon. The Politics of Frustration – The Failed Coup of 1961*. London & New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005, p. 73.

<sup>8</sup> McLaurin, p. 83.

<sup>9</sup> Beshara, Adel, p. 82-83.

**9. Has the military been used to govern the country in the last five years?**

No.

The 1926 constitution established under the French mandate introduced a system of republican democracy and “placed the military under strict civilian control”.<sup>10</sup>

**10. Is there a paramilitary organization separate from the regular military, used to provide regime or leader security?**

No.

However, the police, gendarmerie, as well as *sûreté générale* all had different internal security responsibilities sometimes overlapping with the internal security role of the regular armed forces. At this period, the role of the army was still vague and often unessential.<sup>11</sup>

**11. Is there an internal intelligence apparatus dedicated to watching the regular military?**

Yes.

The G-2 section or army intelligence.<sup>12</sup>

**12. Has a purge of the officer corps occurred in the last five years?**

No.

I cannot find evidence of this in the major histories already cited.

**13. Is there an institutionalized forum through which civilian leaders and military officers regularly exchange information?**

No.

I cannot find evidence of this in the major histories already cited. However, in general, military officers were given limited access to the political process.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Beshara, Adel, p. 81.

<sup>11</sup> McLaurin, p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> McLaurin, p. 83.

<sup>13</sup> Beshara, Adel, p. 83.