

The First Two Weeks

You have followed the events of the last year with e-NEWS, but what about the next two weeks?

Don't worry about getting the day correct, but write what you expect/hope to happen after the handover of power.

Scoring next week!

Who's Who in the Middle East – Iraq

Two names that came into the news recently were that of Iyad Allawi and Ghazi al-Yawer. They have been proposed (by the IGC) and accepted (by the CPA) respectively as interim President and Prime Minister of Iraq, until a new government is formed as a result of elections. Both of these men were introduced to readers in e-NEWS 12, since they have been members of the IGC since its inception.

When **Ghazi al-Yawer** was nominated as president by the IGC at the end of May it seemed to take the US-led administration by surprise, but the proposal was soon accepted. The post has been presented as being primarily ceremonial in role, though how this will turn out in practice remains to be seen. He brings his US-educated (Georgetown), engineering background with him in his role as interim President, to which he was appointed on June 1st. Al-Yawer is the leader of the Shamar tribe, one of the largest in Iraq.

Iyad Allawi is from Mosul, one of the cities where there has been much violence in recent months. Having opposed Saddam in his rise to power, and fled to the UK, he was injured in an assassination attempt in 1978. Soon after his appointment he named his new cabinet, which will be responsible for government after the handover at the end of this month, and has already been working with the CPA (a separate entity) to smooth the transition. Allawi is a secular Shiite, with contacts among Baathists, and has a Ph.D. in medicine.

Adnan Pachachi was a former Iraqi foreign minister. He was favored by the US and the UN for the post of president, at the beginning of this month, but refused the post: *"the Iraqi people need someone in this office who has the most public support,"* he said. 81-year-old Pachachi is also a close friend of Lakhdar Brahimi, who strongly supported him for president.

Lakhdar Brahimi is the United Nations representative for Kofi Annan. Since earlier this year he has been working with the CPA and IGC in Iraq. One of his first missions was to establish whether national elections were possible prior to the handover of power on June 30th. The CPA had recommended a series of caucus elections, but Ayatollah Sistani had criticized them as non-representative, and called for direct elections with the same timetable. The intervention of Brahimi persuaded Sistani that there was no time for full elections, and he accepted the current schedule, which is to hold elections in December or January. Brahimi's mission marked the return of the UN to the country after a bomb caused the Baghdad office to be closed last year. Lakhdar Brahimi is from Algeria, and had served as foreign minister of that country. His daughter, who used to work for CNN, recently married Jordan's Prince Ali.

Mohammed Baradei was in the news throughout 2002 as the senior weapons inspector responsible for the search for nuclear weapons in Iraq. The whole team, led by Hans Blix, was pulled out prior to the conflict in March of 2003. More recently, still as head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Baradei, of Egyptian nationality, has been leading attempts to get Iran to accept IAEA rulings on the disclosure of nuclear research. Iran had failed to disclose the source of some centrifuges designed for the refinement of nuclear fuel into weapons-grade material. They have also been obstructing IAEA investigations into the origin of some high-grade uranium.

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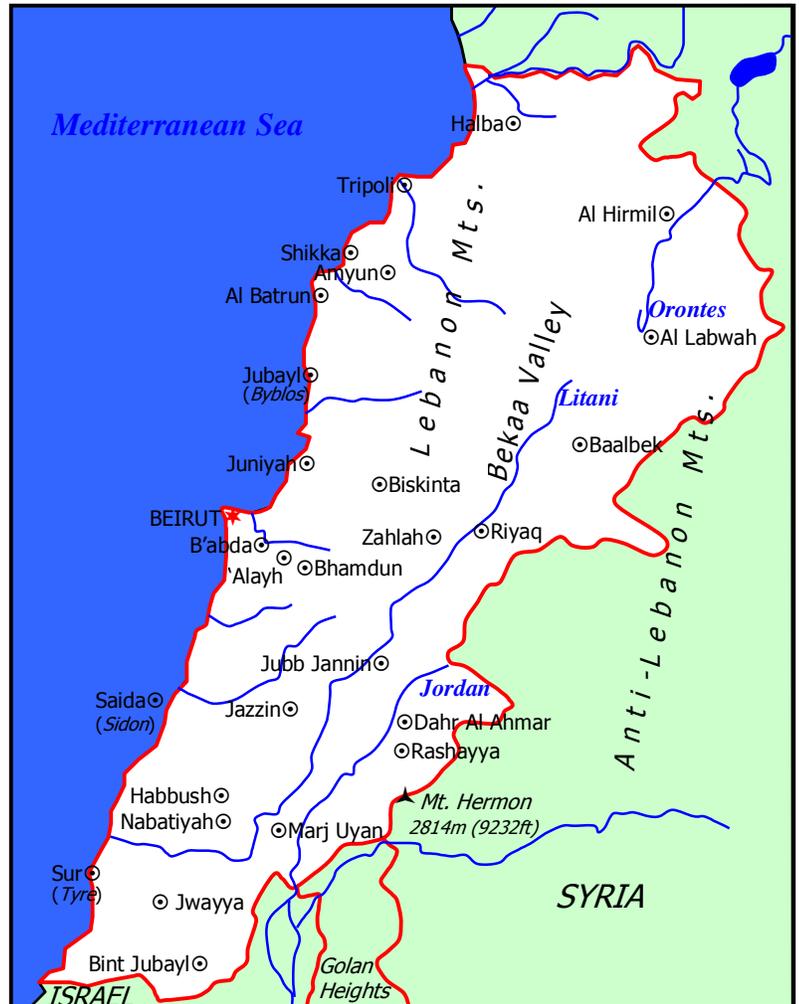
Lebanon

In October 1990, after 15 years of civil war, Lebanon's politicians met at At Taif to put together a National Reconciliation Charter. Even then some Christian militias continued their resistance against the Syrian military presence, and it was another year and another presidential assassination before the Government of National Reconciliation was able to begin its delicate task. This was done under the continued pressure of occupation by more than 30,000 Syrian troops, and, in 1991, a "Treaty of Brotherhood" imposed upon the Lebanese government by Syria.

The constitution of the Second Republic provides for a 50/50 balance in parliament between Muslims and Christians, and three senior government positions – President, Prime Minister and Speaker – reserved for Christian, Sunni and Shiite representatives.

Contemporary Lebanon carries echoes of the war even though many of the ruined buildings have been demolished or refurbished. In its society can still be seen the multiplicity of ethnic divides that fragmented during the 1970s, and the uneasy relationships they have – politics sparring with religion and culture – constantly bubble to the surface.

Lebanon was not always like this. In ancient times the Phoenicians that originated from this part of the Levant spread their culture throughout the Mediterranean basin, establishing colonies in Carthage and Spain that threatened the growth of the Roman Empire. Lebanon saw the Islamic invasion of the 7th century, the reactionary Crusades and the dominance of the Ottoman Empire before being fitted within its current borders. This only happened after World War I when, as with the rest of the Middle East, the European powers parceled the region between them.



To understand Lebanon it is necessary to recognize the disparate groups that make their home within its borders.

Lebanon was for a period the edge of the Islamic Empire, and the battleground where Islamic and Byzantine armies fought. During this period the Maronite Christians retreated into the mountains in the north of Lebanon. Many of these were from what is now Jordan or Syria. The Druze, a heretical Muslim sect, settled around Mt. Hermon in the 11th century, and also in the southern mountains. Maronite cooperation with the Crusaders earned the enmity of their Muslim neighbors during the 12th century. By the 13th century Shiites had moved into the Bekaa Valley area, gradually spreading south. During the Ottoman period the Druze supplied governors answerable to Constantinople, though the conversion to Catholicism engendered conflict between the two groups. By the 1920s the coast and the Bekaa were primarily Muslim, and the mountains Christian, and these were united in French-created Lebanon in 1926, which received its independence in 1943.

A census in 1932 had identified the various sects in order of size: Maronite, Sunni, Shiite, Orthodox, Druze, and Greek Catholic. The 1943 constitution had recognized these proportions, and allocated representation accordingly: a Maronite President, Sunni Prime Minister and Shia Speaker, and seats on a 6:5 Muslim/Christian ratio. However, when 150,000 refugees fled from Israel in 1948 the balance was upset. In 1958 Camille Chamoun's attempt to obtain a second term (in defiance of the constitution) sparked a 3-month civil war, but the policies of Chehab and Helou (from 1964) were easing tensions until the 6-Day War of 1967. This influx, and in particular the state-within-a-state that was the PLO (especially after being expelled from Jordan in 1970) meant that the weakened government was unable to restrict cross-border assaults against Israel. The Lebanese army attempted to restrain the PLO military in 1973 but did not have the breadth of support necessary.

Next Issue: Civil War

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The **Islamic Interface** series will continue in the next issue of e-NEWS.

Contact information: pkclark@pmbx.net