



Lebanon and Geopolitical Transformation: Which Foreign Policy & What Role?

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Introduction

I. Lebanon: An Unforgiving Neighborhood

Of the common foreign policy themes that emerged from the conversation was the harsh geopolitical environment due to Lebanon's unfortunate geographic location, plunging what once was known as the "Switzerland of the East" towards becoming the "Haiti of the Middle East". Incessant tumultuous regional change over the past century included such seismic events as the establishment of Israel (1948), the Nasserite Pan-Arab phenomenon, the rise of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the numerous Arab - Israeli wars including the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the wars in Iraq, the Iran Islamic Revolution, not to mention the Cold War, and more recently the civil war in Syria and the war in Ukraine. This regional turmoil has weighed heavily on Arab nations and made foreign policy very hard even for the more powerful nations in the region, such as Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and Algeria, let alone fledgling ones like Lebanon, which fractured and witnessed a vicious 16-year civil war. Several participants attributed this harsh regional conditions as a destabilizing factor and key impediment to a coherent Lebanese foreign policy:

- a. *"Political geography, which could have been a blessing for Lebanon, turned into a curse."*
- b. *"The imbalance began to enter into the policy of axes in the fifties, especially with the establishment of the Baghdad Pact, which led to the quasi-revolution of 1958 during the era of President Camille Chamoun. In practice, the Baghdad Pact fell in Beirut ..."*
- c. *"Between June 5, 1967, and September 16, 1970, developments took place that gradually made Lebanon lose its constants [Lebanon is neither a corridor (for the West) nor a headquarters (for the Arabs), and saw the armed Palestinian entry into Lebanon.]"*
- d. *"Many developments changed the region in the seventies, from the events in Jordan and the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser."*
- e. *"Arab solidarity reflected positively on Lebanon, while its absence or our lack of commitment to it reflected negatively on it."*
- f. *"It is natural that there is no foreign policy [in Lebanon] because we have gone through occupations and an occupied country does not decide its foreign policy."*

The above statements confirm the external factors that have affected Lebanon and, in many ways denied what could possibly have been a more constant and stable foreign policy. Indeed, at many junctures in its modern history, Lebanon has found itself facing massive external challenges, which it was too geopolitically immature to face up to on the international stage. It simply didn't have the tools, experience, and institutions necessary to fend off sizeable challenges. And yet because of its lack of brute force (due to a relatively weak military), diplomacy was the only instrument at its disposal to drive its interests. And while some Foreign Ministers tried their best and were recognized for their efforts, for example the likes of Fouad Boutros and Elie Salem, their efforts almost invariably proved to be insufficient. To add insult to injury, Geopolitical Instability coincided with internal tensions as different factions often took sides to the overall detriment of the nation.

II. Lebanon's Internal Inadequacies

We cannot stop at highlighting the exogenous elements affecting Lebanon and its foreign policy, but also describing conflicting internal dynamics, which exacerbated the situation:

- a. *“The main reason for the stumbling block in Lebanon's foreign policy is that it has always been a reflection of [fractious] domestic politics.”*
- b. *“Foreign policies in Lebanon are drawn by each Lebanese sectarian component according to what it considers its interests and the interests of its external extension ... The politician in Lebanon always looks abroad, waiting for a solution to come from it.”*
- c. *“The assumption that there is a foreign policy may have been legitimate in the fifties and sixties. Today, it is not based on any fixed foundations, because it has become a mirror of domestic politics.”*
- d. *“Lebanon’s defense policy in terms of who owns the decision of war and peace ... must be in the hands of the executive authority and not in the hands of an internal party.”*
- e. *“There are foreign policies, not one policy ...”*
- f. *“The weakness of Lebanon’s foreign policy is due to the weakness in its institutions and the disintegration of the Lebanese state.”*
- g. *“From a structural point of view, we have not succeeded in establishing a state of institutions, respecting the constitution, and agreeing on who we are. The biggest problem is citizenry and loyalties.”*
- h. *“As diplomats, we have never been provided with a road map that reflects constants as a reference for us, and foreign policy has always been affected by the minister's personality and orientations, while recalling that the margin of the foreign minister's movement in developing countries is rather large.”*
- i. *“The main defect lies in the lack of an administrative structure for foreign policy. The foreign policy in Lebanon was not comprehensive, did not develop, and was not modern. We are absent from the global track in policymaking, although we have qualifications that provide the country with a presence.”*
- j. *“Correcting foreign policy today is difficult with internal divisions. Lebanon's supreme interest is not in neutrality, but in aligning with the West.”*

III. Lebanon’s Foreign Policy Experience- Inconstant Constants

As a result of shifting geopolitical conditions and unstable internal dynamics, several approaches disagreed with the notion that Lebanon had any firm historical constants. Rather, it saw change as the only constant in the nation’s foreign policy, both in strategy as well as practice. These approaches cited foreign policy shifting on two axes post-civil war: The first focused more on economic development, which tended to favor relations with nations that could offer economic support, such as Gulf and Western nations (for example the assassinated Former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri era with tight relations with Saudi Arabia and France).

The other focused on defense and security, which tended to favor relations with other nations such as Syria, Iran, and Russia. For a short while after the ending of the civil war, the two axes collaborated, and Lebanon benefited from the agreement, which became known as the Seen-Seen (Representing the Arabic initials of “S”yria and “S”audi Arabia). However, after the assassination of Lebanese Former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, conflict re-emerged. Indeed, throughout most of Lebanon’s post-independence history, different axes have been seen competing for influence and this has hurt Lebanon’s foreign policy constancy as highlighted by multiple dialogue participants:

- a. *“Lebanon was unable to be absent from the common fateful issues, and on the other hand, it was not able to be part of the axes.”*
- b. *“[There is a] lack of stable national constants, as all of our conflicts in Lebanon are amateurish conflicts and related to siding with an external position, ... Lebanon has never had a single foreign policy, but rather foreign policies ...”*
- c. *“There are no constants if there is no consensus and internal consensus on the one hand, and the presence of regional and international bodies who are convinced with you in these constants, such as the constant of neutrality ...”*
- d. *“I doubt that there will be eternal constants in any foreign policy in Lebanon under the current regime. In setting policies, we cannot rely on old patterns. In Lebanon, we talk about issues as if setting foreign policy could be done in isolation from what is happening in the country and the world; and this is impossible.”*
- e. *“There are no historical constants, and the saying ‘neither East nor West’ is itself not a constant. What is happening today in Lebanon puts it in the dangerous position of becoming forgotten; and the message of the recent Paris meeting is that the Lebanese must help themselves before they ask for help from others.”*

If one considers the above statements discussed within academic and experts’ meetings, it becomes quite evident that Lebanon’s foreign policy has been inconsistent almost from the outset of independence. There was internal and external turmoil under the Presidency of the majority of the Lebanese Presidents. Out of the 13 post-Independent Presidents, 11 have seen external conflict and two have been assassinated. Alliances have also shifted. At one point, for example, Lebanon saw France as an occupier, then it was seen by as “Mother France”. The United States was once seen as a keeper of global peace; at others as a meddling force and the enemy of certain Lebanese factions who oppose Israel’s regional hegemony. Similarly, Syria and Saudi Arabia are seen by some as allies, while others see them as foes. Iran is hailed by some factions as a savior. Others see it as major point of contention due to its close relations with the Hezbollah armed party. During its modern history, as power has shifted and governments changed, so have the inclinations of foreign policy.

And yet to be clear, the Lebanese Constitution in its multiple iterations, including the latest known as the Taëf Accord, did lay certain basic principles on which a constant foreign policy could be formulated more enduringly. In its preamble, the Constitution explicitly states:

- a. *“Lebanon is Arab in its identity and in its affiliation. It is a founding and active member of the League of Arab States and abides by its pacts and covenants. Lebanon is also a founding and active member of the United Nations Organization and abides by its covenants and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Government shall embody these principles in all fields and areas without exception.”*

While the Constitution sets this general guidance for how foreign policy can and perhaps should be conducted, what it does not do is provide guidance on how to resolve potential inconsistencies. For example, if Lebanon abides by Arab pacts and covenants, this could go against UN resolutions (for example the establishment of the State of Israel). Similarly, if it is to abide by UN covenants, what would be Lebanon's position vis-à-vis sanctions against other Arab nations or against Iran or Russia, which are seen by some in Lebanon as indispensable allies?

Most importantly, the Constitution skirted the key question of what would happen to foreign policy when internal factions are divided, especially during periods of shifting geopolitical sands? To this point, it is good to highlight evidence of major foreign policy shifts:

- a. *"Today, we are the partners of Iran and China after we were the partners of the Western countries."*
- b. *"The repercussions of the 1967 {Arab Israeli} war is that it ended Lebanon being a part of the Western world."*

IV. Basis for Lebanese Foreign Policy

When analyzing Lebanon's foreign policy using SWOT analysis, it is better to introduce the dichotomy of hard power and soft power and examine their effects on foreign policy. This can provide insight into the country's strengths and weaknesses.

"Throughout its history, Lebanon has enjoyed two types of power: hard power and soft power. Its foreign policy was most effective in the two decades following independence when the two were more or less in balance. After the civil war, the Lebanese state's hard power receded, whereas the appeal of its soft power remained, with many nations willing to help it. As a result of this power imbalance, Lebanon's foreign policy in recent times has been in somewhat of a limbo."

Other approaches concurred that Lebanon's foreign policy strength almost invariably lies in its soft power, or what Pope John Paul II called "Message". This included Lebanon's religious tolerance, cultural diversity, democratic tradition, liberal inclination, artistic creativity, culinary reputation, commercial exploits, and global presence through its comparatively oversized expat community. This places Lebanon in a unique regional position that few other Middle Eastern nations can equate.

- a. *"Lebanon constitutes a meeting of civilizations and an example of coexistence."*
- b. *"Pope John Paul II described Lebanon as a message because of its an example of diversity and tolerance."*
- c. *"Lebanon will remain the bridge between the East and the West, and the spirit of the message will remain in it as long as we do not extinguish its spark."*
- d. *"I do not know a people who understand Christian culture more than the Muslims of Lebanon, nor anyone who understands Islamic culture more than the Christians of Lebanon."*
- e. *"The Lebanese soft power is still present in every important capital in the world through its history, culture, pluralism, and what distinguishes it is global knowledge, innate adaptability, and constant creativity."*
- f. *"One of the most important constants in Lebanon is pluralism, and this mixing between East and West in its identity."*

If one adds the element of Lebanese expats, serving as emissaries of the nation and what it stands for, when it comes to potential soft power, Lebanon is arguably among the most endowed in the Arab World.

Some approaches did point to the irony of the strengths also being weaknesses. For instance, diversity could be an appeal and a strength, but invariably when it comes to foreign policy it can also cause internal rifts. Similarly, in a region where democracy is for the most part absent, and autocracy rules, what should be democratic strength becomes a weakness exploited by autocratic nations who play by a different set of rules. The challenge then is how to take the democratic diversity and tolerance elements and convert them from weakness to strength. *“The late former Speaker of Parliament, Mr. Hussein Al-Husseini, said one day to the effect that the Lebanese are groups, and each group has relations abroad and is linked to a specific party ... Let us think about what would happen if each group thought to invest this external relationship in the interest of Lebanon. Foreign policy may unite a country with different sides.”*

Such a task is not easy and requires strengthening of the core inside the nation so that external influences cannot penetrate and cause divisions. The statement that “Lebanon lacks the concept of citizenry,” was therefore a cry for a sense of national belonging to supersede sectarian calculations and foreign allegiances. In similar vein, others questioned foreign policy as being superfluous if citizen rights were not provided, and we can think about the Switzerland experience: *“If we do not realize the necessity of achieving citizenship and securing the rights of citizens, loyalties abroad may remain. Securing rights takes place through building institutions that defend and secure citizen rights. Without it, talking about foreign policy is superfluous. Before Switzerland became a country, it secured the rights of its citizens, especially in the countryside. Swiss solidarity began by securing the rights of the citizen. Foreign policy followed internal solidarity and could not exist when the nation is fractured.”*

A lack of thinking about the hard power and its effects on foreign policy is very clear. After all, in the past 50 years, Lebanon has seen its sovereignty impinged upon on multiple occasions, and has generally been incapable of responding, due to its weak overall national security position. Lebanese field generals often complained that they were given more telephones than weapons to fight the enemy (calling for international help). Arguably, only two periods saw Lebanon with any notable military strength. The first was statal, during General Fouad Chehab’s Presidency, which while deploying neutrality as a foreign policy, managed to strengthen internal state security to levels not seen before or since. We will come back to this later on in this report. The second was non-statal, when Hezbollah with the backing of the state and most Lebanese managed to defeat Israel in a war of attrition, banishing them from the occupied South of Lebanon in the year 2000. While clearly this was not a period of foreign policy neutrality, heightened national security considerations and support from the state and the people, meant that a period of relative calm set inside of Lebanon. Unfortunately, these two periods were exceptions; and most of the other periods as far back as Lebanon’s independence have seen national security and by extension sovereignty breached internally or externally due to a lack of any hard power. And each time, it led to seismic internal and foreign policy shifts, such as when Former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri was assassinated in 2005, which saw the end of Syrian tutelage; or more recently with the massive Beirut port explosion on August 4, 2020, which saw a huge rift emerge within Lebanese society, particularly on the topic of Hezbollah arms. These incidents and many more in Lebanon’s history have led to periods of instability. One indelibly has to presume that as long as hard power and national security considerations continue to take backstage, Lebanon could risk continuing to be easily blown off any foreign policy course and any internal political discourse.

Suffice it to conclude that most participants while believing that Lebanon was endowed with enough soft power to garner the goodwill of the international community, agreed that the underlying internal factors may not be currently present in today's Lebanon to set a constant foreign policy. Internal factors including such pre-requisites as citizen rights, social justice, economic development, and national security—all of which combined feed citizens with a strong sense of national belonging (citizenry), which in turn unifies the view of where the nation belongs within itself and in the world, and serves as a basis for what it wants to achieve from a foreign policy perspective.

V. Potential for Lebanese Neutrality

There are many in Lebanon who have been calling for neutrality in order to safeguard Lebanon from all the regional conflicts. This is echoed by many statements:

- a. *“Today, I propose the concept of active positive neutrality, which is a role that secures protection and calls for a minimum level of agreement.”*
- b. *“Positive political neutrality allows Lebanon to be a mediator, a meeting place for civilizations, a facilitator of communication and a point of contact, as Finland was during the Cold War, and as Oman is today.”*

Others found neutrality as being impractical given the current conditions in Lebanon,

- a. *“With regard to neutrality and any possible future role for Lebanon, it is necessary to say that neutrality as it is being advocated today is impossible because there is no internal consensus on it and the neighborhood does not approve of it. It also does not enjoy any international protection or umbrella, and repeating calls for it do not make it a viable project.”*
- b. *“It is impossible to build a state in light of the lack of an internal balance of power and the control of Hezbollah.”*
- c. *“Neutrality in a fierce region is not possible.”*
- d. *“There is no possibility of a state without achieving citizenship. In foreign policy, with regard to positive or active neutrality, we have to be realistic: Important countries are leaving neutrality today to join NATO [Finland], and it is not possible today to expect the outside world to accept Lebanon's neutrality.”*
- e. *“The policy of neutrality is for the strong; and as long as Lebanon is weak, it's neutrality can easily be broken, rendering it unviable.”*

From the discussions between experts and academics, it emerges that in principal neutrality is desired as possibly a way to unite or in the very least reduce accentuated internal divisions. However, from a practical perspective, most participants did not seem to believe that neutrality is a policy that would likely have much success in the short term in Lebanon. Some highlighted Hezbollah as a key impediment to accomplishing neutrality. This may be true; however, historically, even before the existence of Hezbollah, Lebanon faced other non-related movements that made neutrality unattainable, as for instance with the Syrian Nationalists in the 1930's, the Nasserites of the 1950's, the left-wing Communists of the 1960's, and the right-wing Phalange of the 1970's. Each of them tried in their own way to veer the nation in the direction of partisan policies that perhaps provided interests to their own parties and communities over those of the nation. Each of them failed in their endeavor and cost the nation dearly in the process.

History repeating itself in such stark form tends to imply that systemic issues are causing internal dynamics to oppose the national emergence of policies such as neutrality. It raises the question of why different Lebanese factions throughout its post-independence history have felt that their interests could be more readily provided from them working against their own state? And could Lebanon's neutrality, which is seen by some as purely a matter of foreign policy, actually need to be supplemented with other essential requirements on the inside of the country, without which it could neither be attained or sustained? One period in Lebanon's history could shed light on these questions. To this, we turn next.

VI. Essential Requirements- Two Cases from Lebanon's Golden Age?

To answer the previous section's question of whether neutrality could work in Lebanon if it is supplemented with other factors, let's compare two contemporaneous Lebanese Presidencies, that of Camille Chamoun, Lebanon's second President, and that of General Fouad Chehab, its third. The reason for the choice is straightforward. The two terms were consecutive and faced more or less similar geopolitical and internal conditions. Both leaders governed successive terms at the height of the Cold War. The version of the Lebanese constitution under which they operated was identical, and the Lebanese institutions and tools at their disposal were more or less equally mature.

In terms of performance, both leaders are attributed to having created state institutions. Under both Presidents, Lebanon came to be considered as economically developing and on the rise. And yet, notwithstanding all the similarities, one of the two Presidents had his term end in civil strife, while the other's ended positively. Indeed, after more than six decades, it is still seen as having likely been the most prosperous administration in the nation's post-independence history.

On the one hand, President Chamoun's term in office was institutionally and economically fairly accomplished. Having served as ambassador to the United Kingdom and the United Nations prior to becoming President, Chamoun was well versed with geopolitics and well known in international circles. During his term in office, Lebanon gained quite an international reputation. Chamoun, however, wanted to govern with a much more Western-orientated agenda. This caused the emergence of a chasm within Lebanese society, with large portions rejecting this "Westernization" attempt, co-opting instead for counterpart movements such as Nasserite Pan-Arabism. With opposing Lebanese factions rising in arms to reject a second term for Chamoun, a brief episode of civil strife followed, causing Chamoun to request the help of American marines under the Eisenhower Doctrine. They soon landed on the shores of Beirut for the very first time. Sadly, this would not be the first or last time that a Lebanese politician would solicit international support against opposing Lebanese factions. It left a black mark on his legacy.

Chamoun's approach to Foreign Policy stands in stark contrast to that of his successor General Fouad Chehab, who took a much more neutral and centrist foreign policy position, refusing any Western or Arab alliances. So strict was his adherence to this policy that during his six-year term, Chehab refused to travel anywhere in the world, lest it be perceived as geopolitically partisan. Tellingly, when he finally met his powerful Egyptian counterpart, President Jamal Abdul Nasser, Chehab maintained his unbiased stance by only agreeing to meet in an impartial geographic location, which ended up being a military tent that straddled the Lebanese Syrian border. We should highlight this incident and its implications by recalling,

“The tent meeting on the Lebanese-Syrian border between Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and Lebanese President Fouad Chehab laid down with formalities that were respected a stable equation that formed a safety valve for stability in Lebanon until the Arab defeat of 1967: Respect for the sovereignty of Lebanon on the part of the most prominent Arab pole came in exchange for an understanding that the Lebanese foreign policy does not conflict with the Arab and international policy pursued by the United Arab Republic, and without forcing Lebanon to abandon its friendships with the outside world.”

Chehab’s Presidency is not only remembered for his unwavering neutral foreign policy, but as importantly the build-up of state institutions such as the Social Security, for social justice particularly in the poor Beqaa valley, and for economic development all over the nation. Of course, there is another factor that is less often mentioned of Chehab’s term in office, and indeed had been contemporaneously criticized, but which was arguably as critical to his administration as any other: The state military security apparatus, which under his leadership was at the apex of its hard power.

Chehab’s mantra was therefore multi-faceted: *“To protect Lebanon’ independence and sovereignty by preserving the national unity, keeping a balanced foreign policy, social justice, economical liberation, and development planning.”*

The aforementioned brief comparative case together with many discussions within the academic and experts’ platforms highlight two key points. The first is that a partisan foreign policy that conflicts with internal dynamics will likely lead to conflict. The second point is that foreign policy alone is not sufficient to stabilize the nation. Other key factors, both hard and soft, need to be considered, including such things as citizen rights, social justice, economic development, institutional maturity, but also national security. Essentially, the people have to feel that the entire nation is there for them before they can feel that they and their communities are for the nation.

Concluding Remarks: Lebanon’s Future Place in the World- A lesson from its expats

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines foreign policy as “General objectives that guide the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states. The development of foreign policy is influenced by domestic considerations, the policies or behavior of other states, or plans to advance specific geopolitical designs. Leopold von Ranke emphasized the primacy of geography and external threats in shaping foreign policy, but later writers emphasized domestic factors. Diplomacy is the tool of foreign policy, and war, alliances, and international trade may all be manifestations of it.”

The Foreign Policy in Lebanon concurred with this definition agreeing both historically and practically with both foreign factors and domestic factors that have influenced the formulation of Lebanon’s foreign policy. In analyzing Lebanon’s historical foreign policy disorientation, we can highlight:

1. Foreign threats and complications in the vicinity as ever-present in Lebanon’s modern history
2. National security reaching levels of loss of national sovereignty to foreign and non-state actors
3. Internal destabilizing factors fueled by sectarianism and transnationalism
4. A Constitution that at times seems to offer more contradictions than solutions
5. Critically missing factors such as the lack of citizen rights, social justice, and economic stability

All of the above, have helped make foreign policy incongruent and disoriented in Lebanon and has led to an unstable dynamic that has driven the nation into an existential threat. Taking some of these factors and plotting them in the aforementioned case of the two pre-war golden-age Presidencies as well as the latest one, that of Michel Aoun, we find that Chehab's Presidency, which is generally considered to have been the most prosperous in Lebanon's history had a multi-faceted strategy, which included a foreign policy of neutrality together with other key elements. Chamoun's, on the other hand, which was from the same era and had several of the same basic ingredients, opted for an impartial and partisan foreign policy, but ended up in failure. The latest Presidency, that of Michel Aoun (notwithstanding periodic difference), saw failure on multiple domestic fronts, coupled with an unbalanced foreign policy, all of which has left Lebanon despondently isolated and staring at the current existential crisis.

If we measure the success of the different Presidencies, we find that the term of Chehab deploying holistic policies, which included neutrality as a foreign policy, succeeded. Chamoun deployed holistic policies across several fronts but with a non-neutral foreign policy, and his results came mixed. Whereas Aoun's term, which did not see similar multi-faceted strategies of his predecessors and was marked with a highly partisan foreign policy approach, isolating Lebanon, is widely viewed as a failure.

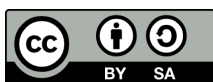
Evidence in Lebanon therefore tends to suggest that there is interplay between both sets of external and internal policies and causality could actually be in both directions—meaning unstable domestic conditions could fuel unstable foreign elements and vice-versa. The case comparison of the presidencies serves as evidence that foreign policies alone may or may not be enough to stem instability in Lebanon. Rather they need to be complemented with stabilizing domestic policies. Chehab's neutrality may very well have succeeded only because it was complemented with national security, social justice, and economic development.

Is the case of Lebanon enough to generalize? Some International studies suggest that neutrality can contribute to stability by reducing the risk of involvement in conflicts and reducing military expenditures, while others suggest that neutrality can lead to insecurity by leaving a country vulnerable to attack or isolation in the international community. For example, a study by David Carment and Dane Rowlands published in the *Journal of Peace Research* in 2003 found that neutrality can enhance a country's security by reducing the risk of involvement in conflicts and by encouraging cooperation with a wider range of countries. However, a study by Sebastian Bersick and Heinrich Kreft published in the journal *Defense and Peace Economics* in 2016 found that neutrality can lead to isolation and insecurity, particularly for small states, by limiting access to international alliances and weakening military capabilities (this could explain why the most salient neutral nation in history, Switzerland, is actually one of the highest in per capita military spend).

Suffice it to say that overall, the relationship between foreign policy (neutrality) and stability is complex and dependent on several factors, and there is no clear consensus in the academic literature on the matter. And the discussions' feedback on this tends to be consistent with the aforementioned studies. Still in Lebanon's case, there is something to be said that during its golden age, its stability and success did occur under the only Presidency, which had a strict neutral policy matching domestic policies that worked to strengthen the bonds of citizenry with that of the state, as well as notable national security.






In conclusion, Lebanon's foreign policy decisions need to be taken holistically with a basket of complementary domestic policies, which include constitutional, economic, social, judicial, and national security considerations. Citizenry, which was expressed by several participants as being elemental, can only be accomplished through equal citizen rights. Only then could a contiguous foreign policy be broached and supported by the populace at large. Neutrality per se as a foreign policy in isolation is impractical to be considered. However, it has worked in the past in Lebanon when it served as the capstone that buttresses all other transcendental national policies.

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