

*NES/11/12*

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Geoffrey Kemp  
National Security Council  
Room 351, Executive Office Bldg.

We were asked for a brief description of the Phalange and thought you might like to have a copy. It was drafted by [redacted] of OPA/NESA Division.

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[redacted]

Chief, Near East  
South Asia Division  
Office of Political Analysis

Date 15 May 1981

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Helene

With the level of interest on Lebanon, [redacted] put together this descriptive account of the Phalange for the NIO. We are sending a copy to Kemp/NSC, but thought we also might send it to D/NFAC, DDCI, and DCI. It might be useful background reading. Would you sign the blue notes?

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[redacted]

Date 15 May 1981

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MEMORANDUM FOR: D/NFAC

We had a request for a brief descriptive account of Lebanon's Phalange Party and would like to share it with you. It was prepared by [redacted] of OPA's Near East South Asia Division. (b)(3) (b)(6)

Helene L. Boatner  
Director  
Political Analysis

Date 15 May 1981

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MEMORANDUM FOR: DDCI

We had a request for a brief descriptive account of Lebanon's Phalange Party and would like to share it with you. It was prepared by [redacted] of OPA's Near East South Asia Division. (b)(3) (b)(6)

Helene L. Boatner  
Director  
Political Analysis

Date 15 May 1981

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MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI

We had a request for a brief descriptive account of Lebanon's Phalange Party and would like to share it with you. It was prepared by [redacted] of OPA's Near East South Asia Division.

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Helene L. Boatner  
Director  
Political Analysis

Date 15 May 1981

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

15 May 1981

MEMORANDUMLEBANON'S PHALANGE PARTY ~~(U)~~

The Phalange party is the largest Maronite Christian political organization in Lebanon. Supported by an armed militia of 20,000 men, the Phalange is virtually a state within a state. The party and its various smaller Christian allies control a substantial portion of central Lebanon encompassing the area from East Beirut north along the coast to Batrun and extending inland to the Sannin ridge line.

~~(C)~~

Within this area--the traditional Maronite heartland known as Mount Lebanon--the Phalange collects taxes, enforces the law, and dispenses justice. The party runs the port of Juniyah, its supply-line to Israel and the outside world, and controls its own radio station, the Voice of Lebanon.

~~(C)~~Origins and History

The Lebanese Phalange Organization (Munazzamat al-Kataeb al-Lubnaniyya in Arabic) is largely the creation of one influential Lebanese family, the Jumayyils. Politics in Lebanon is very much a family or clan business. The Jumayyils are a major Maronite clan of long standing who dominate the politics of their ancestral home at Bikfayya.

~~(C)~~

The Phalange was founded as a youth organization on 21 November 1936 by Pierre Jumayyil, who is still the party leader. Pierre, born in 1905, studied pharmacy in Beirut and Paris in the 1930s. In 1936, while attending the Olympics in Berlin, Pierre was very impressed by the Hitler Youth Organization and the other fascist parties of Europe; he created the Phalange to serve as the defender of Maronite interests in Lebanon. The Phalange's membership soon grew to over 20,000.

~~(C)~~

*This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] of the Near East South Asia Division of the Office of Political Analysis at the request of the National Intelligence Officer for Near East South Asia. Information as of 15 May 1981 was used in preparation of this paper. Questions and comments should be addressed to Chief, Near East South Asia Division, OPA on*

[redacted]

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The Phalange became a political party after France gave Lebanon its independence in 1945. It has always controlled several seats in Lebanon's parliament, and Pierre has often served in the cabinet. ~~(S)~~

The Phalange played a key role in the 1958 civil war, supporting President Camille Shamun against a Muslim leftist coalition backed by Egypt and Syria. The party provided the bulk of the Christian militiamen in the 1975-76 civil war as well. ~~(S)~~

The Phalange enjoys the sympathy of many Maronite members of the Lebanese army--traditionally led mostly by Christians. Units of the army have often fought alongside the Phalange since 1976, most recently during recent clashes in Beirut. ~~(S)~~

#### Ideology and Program

The Phalange is dedicated to the ideal of a separate Lebanese nation and to preventing Lebanon's absorption into a greater Syria or a unified Arab state. The party is dedicated, in particular, to preserving Maronite Christian hegemony in Lebanon. ~~(S)~~

The Maronites are a Uniate Christian Church affiliated with the Vatican. They comprise about 30 percent of the total Lebanese population and slightly more than half of its Christians. There are no exact statistics on Lebanon's population. There has been no official census since 1932 when the Christian were slightly in the majority; most observers now believe the Muslims are in the majority. ~~(S)~~

The Phalange acknowledges that Lebanon is an Arab country, but believes its confessionally divided population makes it a bridge between the West and the Arab world. The party has always argued that Lebanon should remain neutral in Arab politics and oppose any effort to unite Lebanon with other Arab states. ~~(S)~~

The party also supports the traditional Christian dominance of Lebanese politics, which was created by the French colonial government and enshrined in the 1943 National Pact, which mandates a Maronite President, a Muslim Prime Minister, and a slight Christian majority in parliament. ~~(S)~~

Faced with the realities of today's Lebanon with its Muslim majority, some in the Phalange favor creation of a Swiss-style canton system for Lebanon in which the Maronites would control one area, the Druze another, Sunni Muslims a third, and the Shia Muslims a fourth. A weak central

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government would head the confederation. This program was endorsed by the Phalange in a document entitled "The Lebanon We Want to Build Up" published last December. ~~(C)~~

The Phalange sees the Palestinians in Lebanon--most of whom are Muslims who left Israel in 1948--as a threat to the Maronite community. The Phalange believes the 400,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon should return to their homes in Israel. This view--sharply disputed by Israel--has been played down in recent years but is a potential friction point between the Phalange and its Israeli ally. ~~(C)~~

The Phalange initially welcomed the Syrian intervention in Lebanon in 1976 that saved the Christian militias from defeat by the Palestinians and Muslim leftists. Since late 1977, however, the Phalange has argued that Syria is protecting the Palestinians and trying to annihilate the Christians, and that it should leave. ~~(C)~~

#### Organization, Leadership, and Membership

The Phalange has always been a well organized and disciplined party. It is led by its president, Pierre Jumayyil, and his sons Bashir and Amin. Bashir's control over most of the Phalange militia gives him the dominant voice in party affairs. Bashir is the leading advocate of an aggressive anti-Syrian, pro-Israel policy. He generally has the backing of his father. ~~(C)~~

Bashir has also led the Phalange drive to dominate Lebanon's other Christian parties. He ordered the June 1978 attack on the pro-Syrian Franjyah clan in northern Lebanon. He also planned the Phalange attack on Shamun's National Liberal Party militia last year which led to the NLP's forced merger with the Phalange. The Phalange dominates the Lebanese Front, a loose coalition of Maronite groups. ~~(C)~~

Amin represents the Phalange in the Lebanese parliament. Amin--who has lost influence in recent years--generally favors a more conciliatory policy toward the Syrians and often urges negotiations. He symbolizes a minority view in the Phalange that fears Bashir's pro-Israel policies will isolate the Maronites from the Arab world, ultimately creating a weak Maronite ministate cut off from the economically powerful Persian Gulf oil producers and dependent on Israeli military protection. ~~(C)~~

In the 1960s the Phalange sought Muslim members--especially Shia Muslims--but never attracted many. Lebanon's Greek Catholics are well represented in the party, but the Phalange has never gained much support from the Greek Orthodox Christians, the second largest Christian community. ~~(C)~~

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~The Israeli Connection

The Phalange has had occasional discreet ties with Israel since the 1940s, but it generally supported the Arab opposition to Israel until the 1970s. In need of an ally against the Palestinians in the civil war, the Phalange established secret contacts with Tel Aviv in early 1976. Israel has since become its key outside military ally. ~~(C)~~

Tel Aviv has provided arms and ammunition, including some Sherman tanks, through Juniyah; it has also trained Phalange fighters in Israel.  regularly visit the Maronite heartland to advise and consult with the party leadership. Senior officials like Bashir have visited Israel. ~~(C)~~

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Israel also serves as a link between the Phalange and Major Haddad's Christian enclave in south Lebanon. Phalange fighters have traveled through Israel to reinforce Haddad in the past. ~~(C)~~

The Phalange also buys weapons from private arms dealers. To finance these purchases the party depends in part on funds raised in the large Maronite communities in South America and the US. The party has some 40 offices outside Lebanon for fund-raising and information purposes. ~~(C)~~

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SUBJECT: Lebanon's Phalange Party (U)

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NFAC/OPA/NESA/ISL/ [redacted] (15 May 81)

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