

# Peacekeeping in Lebanon

The toll of the American dead has passed 200 and continues to climb, but the most serious casualty of all is Lebanon itself. While the centuries-old hatreds seethe beneath the surface and men of violence claim legitimacy on a dozen or more fantasies of power and prestige, the fighting will continue. Lebanon is fast becoming a land without hope. On Sunday morning, Oct. 23, the dead were French and American members of the multinational peacekeeping force. Next they could be Italians or British, just as in the past they have been Druse or Maronite, Shiite or Sunni, Israeli or Palestinian. Will the bombing and sniping ever end, or is Lebanon a nation whose future holds nothing but serial genocide?

Dark questions such as these have prompted the nations of the multinational force to question whether their efforts to promote peace in a nation of unending war are futile. The answer is not obvious. Both President Reagan and President Mitterrand courageously rejected the possibility of an immediate withdrawal of their nation's forces. Great nations resolved to bring peace to a tortured people cannot now surrender their ideals to faceless assassins of the night. Stay they must, at least for a time.

The peacekeepers knew the risk they had undertaken and the tactics of their anonymous enemies from a similar attack on the American embassy in Beirut last April in which employees were killed. This experience—as viewed with the unchallengeable wisdom of hindsight—readily raises questions about the precautions taken to protect the sleeping Marines. Any hope that agents of terror would regard members of the peacekeeping force as agents of peace, and thus immune to indiscriminate slaughter, has crumbled. The Marines, despite their purely defensive posture, are in a state of war and must be kept on continual war alert.

When the peacekeeping forces came ashore over a year ago, it was believed that their mere presence would lend stability to a central Lebanese government and prepare the way for an orderly withdrawal of all foreign troops, particularly the Syrian and Israeli armies that had created an artificial partition of the country. With the Palestine Liberation Organization effectively destroyed as a fighting force, the chances for success seemed better than ever before.

The plans did not materialize. President Amin Gemayel has not been able to set up a stable coalition government with a meaningful sharing of power, nor has his army been able to subdue the warring factions in the Shuf Mountains.

Syria has rejected every scheme for removing its troops, since its President, Hafez al-Assad, has dreams of extending his nation's borders through an occupation army supplied with Soviet weapons. Finally, when Prime Minister Menachem Begin, in one of his last acts in office, ordered the partial, unilateral withdrawal of Israeli troops, the civil war in Lebanon was resumed without restraint. The situation in the country today is far different from what it was when the Marines first arrived in West Beirut and far different from the Lebanon that diplomats hoped to create after a year of peacekeeping.

**T**he bombs of October, then, are not a turning point as much as the cause of a shocking realization that the turn has already taken place. It is time for the peacekeeping nations to reevaluate their role. If the initial purposes of the mission have been frustrated by factors outside of their control, then the peacekeepers must redefine their goals. The peoples supplying the peacekeeping forces should know the purpose of their sacrifice. The War Powers Act should enable Congress to set a realistic timetable for the Administration and its allies to reformulate their policies and aims. If agreement cannot be reached and consensus forged, then the peacekeepers should withdraw.

The effect of still another collapse of civil order would be catastrophic for the Lebanese people, and it could lead to all-out war between Syria and Israel. The men of violence, who dream of rising to power through chaos, have forgotten their innocent compatriots as they try to intimidate their enemies. Unchecked civil war is the nightmare that should awaken the factional chieftains now meeting in Geneva from their dreams of power to the daylight realities of life and death.

## The Georgetown Decision

In an excellent opinion written by Judge Sylvia Bacon, the District of Columbia Superior Court has upheld the right of Georgetown University to deny "university recognition" to gay student organizations. The District of Columbia Hu-

man Rights Act forbids discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, but the judge held that Georgetown's rights under the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment protect the university against official endorsement of organizations actively promoting homosexual life styles.

The organizations can still meet on the Georgetown campus; that was not the issue. The organizations have "student body endorsement"; they wanted the additional prestige of "university recognition." Georgetown refused the additional recognition because the organizations were engaged in activities contrary to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

The students argued that Georgetown could not invoke the Free Exercise Clause because the university is engaged in secular educational activities and receives Federal funds. Judge Bacon rejected both arguments. After reviewing the evidence and the law, she concluded that Georgetown has a "formal affiliation with the Catholic Church," even though religious indoctrination is not the purpose of the university and students are admitted without regard to their religious affiliation.

On the funding issue, she concluded that institutions with both sectarian and secular purposes "may receive Federal funds for secular purposes without abandoning sectarian activities and without violating the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment."

The student organizations also tried to persuade Judge Bacon that the Catholic Church did not really condemn what they were doing. Obviously unimpressed, the judge held that Georgetown's evidence to the contrary was most persuasive and that, in any event, the First Amendment precludes civil courts from settling controversies about religious doctrine.

Finally, the students argued that Georgetown could not discriminate against homosexuals any more than Bob Jones University may discriminate against blacks. The judge tersely rejected this argument, stating that there is no national policy with respect to sexual orientation comparable to the national policy against racial discrimination in education.

Judge Bacon's decision is a welcome recognition of the dual character of church-related colleges and universities. Although subject to many laws and regulations, they do not have to shed their religious identity in order to provide secular education or receive public financial assistance.

## Nicaragua's Peace Plan

The Reagan Administration's war on Nicaragua is becoming more and more indefensible on both moral and political grounds. The counterrevolutionary rebels or contras, who

are "covertly" supported by the Central Intelligence Agency, are waging a guerrilla war using terrorist tactics against the Sandinista Government. They are succeeding in disrupting the economic life of the poverty-stricken country while at the same time giving the Sandinistas an excuse for their undemocratic and repressive measures. The attacks are strengthening the Sandinistas politically since anyone who opposes them can easily be branded as an ally of "imperialistic, North American aggressor."

At first, the Reagan Administration defended its aid to the contras by saying that they would disrupt the flow of arms to the guerrillas in El Salvador. Although limited arms shipments did come from Nicaragua, most of the arms held by the guerrillas were stolen from the Salvadoran Government. One guerrilla leader jokingly said that the United States should keep sending supplies to the Salvadoran army because it helped him get weapons. But the contras' attacks on Nicaragua have gone far beyond stopping the flow of arms into El Salvador. The entire economic infrastructure of Nicaragua has come under attack.

The true aim of the Reagan Administration is the overthrow of the Sandinista Government. While Sandinistas are at fault for not respecting human rights and for failing to move toward the democratic procedures that they promised during the revolution, they are not notably worse than many other Latin American dictatorships. Simply because they are leftist rather than rightist does not legitimate acts of war and terrorism against them.

The real purpose of the Reagan policy in Central America has been emphasized by the Administration's outright rejection of the security accords offered by the Nicaraguan Government. Under the four accords, the Sandinista Government would pledge not to support guerrillas in El Salvador if the United States would stop supporting rebels in Nicaragua. Nicaragua would also not permit territory "to be utilized to affect or to threaten the security of the United States or to attack any other state." This provision, according to a senior Sandinista official, would prohibit Soviet or Cuban military bases from Nicaragua. The Central American countries—Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Panama—would police the agreements and have the power "to fully investigate any alleged violation—including territory of the alleged violator." Violators would have to pay fines and compensation to the victims.

While there are details in the accords that need clarification and modification through negotiations (and the anti-Yanqui language that must be deleted from the accords), the swift rejection of the accords by the United States is unwise. In this latest of proposals the Sandinistas appear to be attempting to address the legitimate security concerns of the United States. If the Reagan Administration does not reverse itself and enter into negotiations with Nicaragua, then the Senate should follow the House in cutting off funds for any further covert action against the Sandinista Government.