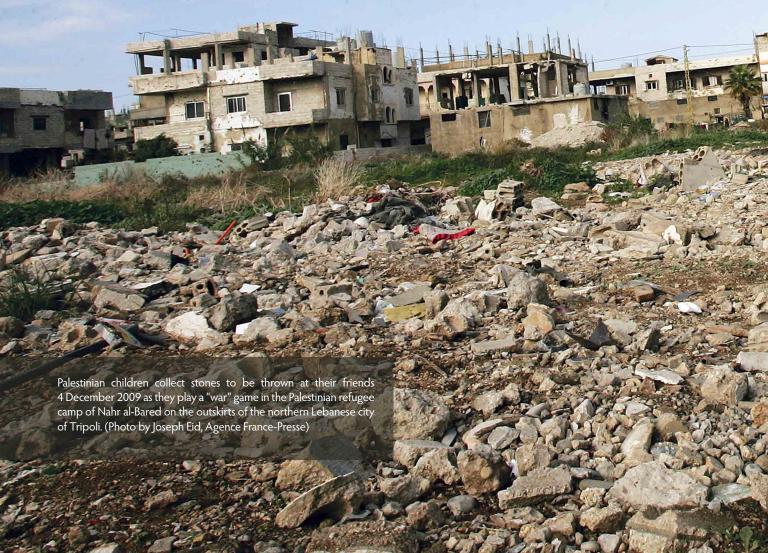


Maj. Jean Dagher, Lebanese Army





nation's military is considered a reflection of its people's norms, culture, values, and expectations, and its civilian and military leaders share the responsibility for national security.1 This tenet was tested in Lebanon when the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) were employed in the unique circumstances of the 2007 Nahr al-Bared Campaign (NBC).² The LAF's deployment within its country's borders for stability and combat operations appears to be inconsistent with a traditional army's role in a sovereign state. Since the conclusion of the Lebanese Civil War in 1990 and the country's reconstruction in 1991, the Lebanese government has entrusted the LAF with a stability mission in the country's interior with its units assigned across all Lebanon. Thus, the LAF finds itself acting as an expeditionary force in its own country in addition to its central border security mission.3 In this context,

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the LAF experience in NBC deserves study.

This article first demonstrates how the four instruments of national power-diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME)—represent a framework for understanding the LAF lines of effort (LOEs) in the NBC.4 Second, it analyzes the NBC by providing an overview of the NBC context: the Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp, Fatah al-Islam (FAI) and the rise of Islamic terrorism within the camp, and the Palestinians' ambiguous legal status in Lebanon. Third, the article describes the events preceding the NBC, explains the LAF singular context, and describes the operational design

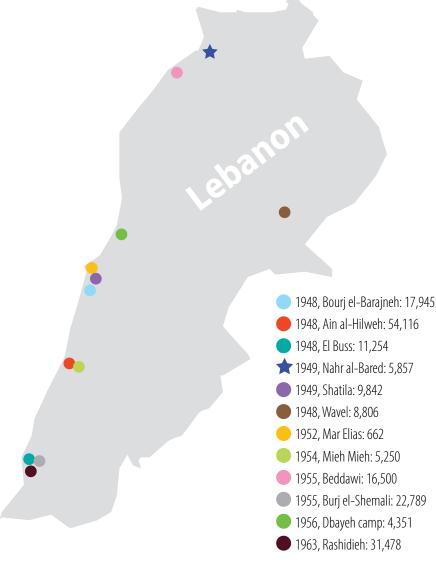
framework developed to achieve the campaign's desired objectives. Lastly, it concludes by recommending what military leaders can learn from a study of the NBC regarding the application of the DIME instruments of national power as LOEs in future engagements.

Over the course of more than three months (20 May-2 September 2007), the LAF was able to defeat the FAI terrorist organization that intended to establish an Islamic State (IS) presence in the North Governorate of Lebanon (hereafter called North Lebanon). In NBC, the LAF achieved major success, considering the magnitude of the challenges faced by the military. Through the effective application and integration of diplomatic measures, informational activities, military operations, and economic actions, the LAF became the most essential and critical means to advance the Lebanese government's national interests. The DIME approach led directly to the defeat of the FAI. The fighting in NBC also refocused attention on the LAF's role as the primary defender of Lebanese sovereignty, its constitution, and the formula for coexistence between the diverse religions and ethnicities that make up Lebanese society.

The Nahr al-Bared Campaign

The NBC was unique for several reasons. First, the campaign was the first joint operation conducted by the LAF since its establishment in 1945. Second, it was the first time that the military entered a Palestinian camp in Lebanon during peacetime. Additionally, the LAF's death toll was the highest since the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), totaling 169 soldiers. Lastly, the internally displaced personnel, the majority being Palestinians with few Lebanese, reached more than twenty thousand.⁵

The clashes between the FAI and LAF began the night of 19 May 2007. After a bank robbery, the Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF) raided an apartment in Tripoli, North Lebanon, and the suspects inside turned out to be militants from FAI. Violence escalated between the FAI and the ISF, and before dawn the next morning, the FAI militants simultaneously attacked and seized the three LAF checkpoints around the Nahr al-Bared Camp, killing thirty-two LAF soldiers. The militants spread outside the perimeter of the camp with the aim of expanding and seizing northern Lebanon and establishing a terrorist base in the region. The hostile attack led to 105 days of ferocious war between the FAI terrorist organization and the LAF. The campaign ended



(Listed are the established year, name, and registered population of each refugee camp as of 2014. Figure by Arin Burgess, Military Review. Source: Wikipedia)

Figure 1. The Twelve Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon

2 September 2007 with the fall of the camp to the LAF and the escape of some FAI militants.⁶

Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp. To understand the military challenges posed by the NBC, it is necessary first to describe and analyze the geographic and demographic conditions of the Nahr al-Bared Palestinian Camp. Nahr al-Bared Camp is situated on the Mediterranean shoreline, approximately ten miles north of Tripoli—a city with the most extensive Sunni population in Lebanon—and

some twenty miles south of the Syrian border. Additionally, the main road that links Tripoli to Syria intersected the camp.⁷ The term "Old Camp" refers to the official camp established in 1949 as an emergency shelter for Palestinians when they fled Palestine beginning in 1948 during the Nakba (catastrophe—refers to the mass expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from their homes as a result of Israel's declaration as an independent nation). Old Camp originally occupied an area of 0.2 square kilometers.8 The extension of the camp during and after the Lebanese Civil War to adjacent areas, approximately two square kilometers, became known as the "New Camp."9 Except for one main road of four lanes that connected the two entrances of Nahr al-Bared, narrow corridors and randomly constructed, closely spaced buildings above underground tunnels of reinforced concrete characterized the Old Camp. Those tunnels, more than twelve feet underground, were initially designed as protection from Israeli air strikes. The number of buildings is estimated to be five hundred.

In 2007, according to the

United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the number of registered Palestinians in Lebanon was close to 450,000; half of them lived in the country's twelve refugee camps recognized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as shown in figure 1. The population of Nahr al-Bared at the time of the conflict was approximately twenty-seven thousand refugees, making it second largest among the camps. More than twenty Palestinian factions shared the responsibility for camp

security—bearing weapons, recruiting, and conducting military training inside the camp.¹¹

While the Nahr al-Bared Camp developed an informal credit-based economy, a major wholesale distribution center, and a dynamic economic center in North Lebanon, the complicated demographic conditions and the various Palestinian factions inside the camp formed an unstable environment where terrorist ideologies flourished. In addition, Palestinian extremism was particularly rampant in North Lebanon since Tripoli served as a strategic locale for a symbolic representation of the scattered Lebanese Sunni community.¹²

Fatah Al-Islam and the rise of Islamic terrorism. Lebanon and Palestinian camps saw a rapid increase of terrorist organizations and Islamic jihadist extremism in 2006-2007. This security concern put the Lebanese government and the LAF under immense pressure. The FAI terrorist group was founded by Shaker al-Absi, a Palestinian-Jordanian, who believed in a "caliphate," or Islamic rule, in North Lebanon. The group's leadership council was composed of a media representative, military commanders, and a legislative board. Its origin was inspired by al-Qaida and its belief in the concept of

"jihad." Al-Absi was a close associate of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the former leader of al-Qaida in Iraq, and was believed to have established an original connection between the two organizations.

The first appearance of FAI was in the Nahr al-Bared Camp in November 2006. The expansion of FAI may be traced to the year 2000, when an Islamic armed group, al-Takfir wal-Hijra, engaged in an armed conflict with the LAF in al-Diniyeh, North Lebanon. Those among them who were able to escape fled to Nahr al-Bared. Also, Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001 and Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 helped to spread the terrorist ideology in the Middle East. During this period, many militants who gained combat experience fled to the Nahr al-Bared Camp and joined the FAI.¹⁴ In addition, the withdrawal of the Syrian intelligence and security forces from Lebanon in 2005 allowed Islamist activities in the camp to proliferate. As the Sunni-Shia split grew after the 2006 Lebanon War, Salafi ideology flourished among Sunnis, especially those in Nahr al-Bared Camp, who sought to emulate in North Lebanon the Shia Hezbollah's model in South Lebanon.¹⁵

The Lebanese situation in the heart of the Levant made it a part of the ideological, political



and territorial FAI IS-building project in Lebanon. Militants fleeing from neighboring countries found the Nahr al-Bared Camp a refuge from Lebanese security forces and spread their ideology there. In this context, the FAI was able to penetrate Nahr al-Bared and secure a military base inside the camp in late 2006.

The ambiguous Palestinian legal status. Since the Palestinians arrival to Lebanon as refugees in 1948, they have held an unclear legal and political position, which has led to their isolation from the Lebanese economic and social system. The UNRWA operates in Lebanon and provides Palestinian refugees education, health, social, and relief services. The agency is formally in charge of the twelve Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and is recognized by the UNHCR. These camps, including Nahr al-Bared, were kept out of reach of the LAF.

The Cairo Accord in 1969 regulated the relations between Palestinian Camps and the Lebanese State, endorsed Palestinian self-rule inside the camps, and provided the Palestinians virtual autonomy and the right to run their camps. ¹⁶ Lebanon became the only country to allow Palestinians to train and carry arms within the refugee camps' border and to exclude the presence of Lebanese military and military checkpoint

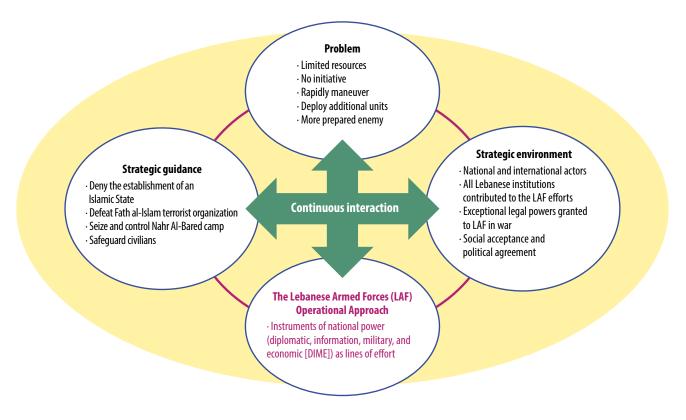
at the camps' entrances.¹⁷ The threat of the "Tawteen," or permanent settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon, represented an excuse to justify the Lebanese government's economic restrictions toward the Palestinian refugees.¹⁸ This ambiguous Palestinian legal status and the weakness of long-standing Lebanese-Palestinian agreements led to favorable conditions for harboring terrorists inside Nahr al-Bared Camp.¹⁹

Palestinians in the camp also suffered from severe problems: poverty, shortage of economic opportunities, high unemployment, lack of infrastructure, and poor housing conditions. These were major causes of frustration and feelings of injustice within Palestinians who adopted FAI extremist ideologies. In addition, the devised posture and polarized politics among the various Palestinian opposing factions characterized the relationship among Palestinian groups sharing the power in the camp, who were unable to provide security for the Palestinians.²⁰

The events preceding the NBC. Between 2006 and 2007, the FAI terrorist organization conducted six armed robberies that served as a major source of finance. Beginning in 2006, the Lebanese authorities started becoming increasingly aware of the terrorist threat, and the LAF arrested several FAI-affiliated

Smoke rises from the Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared 3 June 2007 in northern Lebanon. In fighting that lasted over the course of more than three months (20 May–2 September 2007), the Lebanese Armed Forces were able to defeat the Fatah al-Islam terrorist organization that intended to establish an Islamic State presence in North Lebanon. (Photo by Ramzi Haidar, Agence France-Presse)





(Figure originally from Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Planning [Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2017], IV-7; modified by author)

Figure 2. The Nahr Al-Bared Campaign Operational Design Framework

individuals. In January 2006, thirteen suspected al-Qaida-linked militants were detained on suspicion of planning suicide attacks in Lebanon. In February 2006, the Lebanese ISF arrested five FAI militants involved in attacks on military posts in Beirut, which the FAI claimed to be in retaliation for the January arrests.²¹ Also in February 2006, a boat loaded with weapons was seized off the coast of Tripoli, signaling an emerging military operation. In November 2006, the FAI seized control of Palestinian faction bases (Fatah al-Intifada) in the camp and raised black banners with the inscription "Tawhid," literally "God's unity."22 This ignited an armed conflict between different Palestinian factions and the FAI in the Nahr al-Bared Camp. Consequently, the LAF invoked a series of security measures, including enforcement of checkpoints around the entrances of the camp to deal with the security concerns.

The NBC was a clear turning point in Lebanese history. In this campaign, the LAF was able to unite the Lebanese population and politicians, eliminate terrorism, and safeguard Lebanese sovereignty. This successful accomplishment was due to the unity and cohesion of the LAF and its efficient application of the instruments of national power as the operational approach to NBC.

The Lebanese Armed Forces Singular Context

The context in which the LAF was able to use all the instruments of national power is considered unique because of Lebanese particularities. The DIME framework is not part of the LAF's doctrine; regardless, the LAF was able to apply this terminology and principles in managing the NBC. The LAF integrated, coordinated, and synchronized all components of DIME effectively in support of NBC military operations to achieve national political objectives.

The Republic of Lebanon is a parliamentary democracy with a unique confessional sectarian political system consisting of a power–sharing mechanism between religious communities. The unwritten *National Pact* of 1943 and the 1989 *Taif Agreement* consecrated that the



top three political positions are distributed as follows: the president is a Christian Maronite, the speaker of the parliament is a Muslim Shia, and the prime minister is a Muslim Sunni. Also, Christians and Muslims equally share political positions in the parliament and the government, which are proportionally subdivided according to each denomination's percentage in the population. The LAF has similar religious sharing mechanism where officers' corps commissions are divided equally among Christians and Muslims according to an ethnoreligious quota reflecting the balance in the Lebanese society.²³

The relationship between LAF command and civilian authorities presents an insightful perspective. Even though the LAF is subordinate to civilian control of the government and the president—the commander in chief of the armed forces—the balance between civilian and military leadership comes from agreement on key issues and a mutual understanding of defense vision. The LAF executes its mission within the Lebanese government defense and security policy represented by the Ministry of National Defense. Shared identity and values between military and society imply that the relation between the Lebanese civilian and military leaders does not necessary follow a normative rule. The LAF is

Lebanese soldiers, policemen, and civilians watch as coffins containing the bodies of Islamist militants are transported 4 October 2007 during their burial in Tripoli, Lebanon. Lebanese policemen and soldiers buried ninety-eight bodies of Islamist militants of the Fatah al-Islam group, killed during clashes with the Lebanese army in the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp. The clashes ended with the army in full control of the camp. (Photo by Omar Ibrahim, Reuters)

not a "blind obedient"; instead, it carries orders because its command agrees with them.²⁵

The relationship between the Lebanese government and the LAF can best be described as hanging between an objective and a subjective civilian control, such as the one Samuel Huntington, a founder of modern civil-military relationship theory, advances in his book, *The Soldier and the State*. This civil-military relationship standpoint is because the LAF reflects all social forces and political ideologies of the Lebanese society and prevents any particular religious subgroup or political party from having enhanced control over Lebanese military affairs at the expense of others.²⁶ The more social divisions and absence of unified political decision on key issues, the less the LAF's resilience to dealing with national threats and conducting any critical operation becomes, and vice versa.

The three military services (land, air, and naval forces) fall under the LAF command. The LAF missions are to defend the nation's borders against any external attack, preserve sovereignty, enforce the constitution, and contribute to humanitarian assistance. In 1991, after the conclusion of the Lebanese Civil War, the Lebanese government entrusted the LAF with the mission of keeping peace and stability in the country's interior, in coordination with the ISF and other security forces. The LAF deployed its troops across all Lebanon performing homeland security tasks, with units assigned to each of the five military regions that divide the nation.²⁷ In addition, the Lebanese constitution and the National Defense Law gave the LAF flexible legal powers that become exceptional when the government declares a state of emergency or in case the population is exposed to danger.

The LAF's focus toward internal security reflects its positioning toward the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and Nahr al-Bared Camp in particular. In NBC, the LAF acted as more than just a military force; it represented the Lebanese population's unity and played a prominent role in Lebanese society. Because of the homeland security posture with units deployed in the north and available reserve units, the LAF was able to rapidly maneuver to respond to the FAI terrorist hostile actions and regain control on the Nahr al-Bared Camp.

The Nahr al-Bared Campaign Operational Design Framework

In the 2007 NBC, synergy between the LAF and all the civilian actors was enabled through coordination among Lebanese diplomatic, informational, military, and economic entities to face the challenges from FAI terrorist activities. The DIME measures taken by the LAF reinforced its position before the FAI in the NBC and allowed it to overcome the campaign's complex operational environment. The operational design framework (shown in figure 2, page 102) illustrates the strategic environment in which the campaign was executed, the problem that the LAF addressed, the strategic direction and guidance from the Lebanese national leaders, and the LAF operational approach to solving the problem.

The Strategic Environment. The magnitude of the NBC and the various military, political, religious, and international actors involved created a complex strategic environment. During the campaign, all Lebanese institutions contributed to the LAF efforts in combatting terrorism and put their efforts in the hands of the LAF leadership. The exceptional legal powers granted to the LAF in time of war provide the context in which the LAF was able to make use of all the DIME instruments of national power during the NBC. Lebanon's complex political system was subordinated by a social consensus and unified decision-making among the different religious and political parties of Lebanese society that prevented any objecting subgroup from impeding the LAF and enabled it to focus on dealing with the FAI national threats.

The problem. The LAF was challenged during the NBC to rapidly maneuver with limited resources to regain control of the three checkpoints around the Nahr al-Bared Camp and to deploy additional units to defeat a more prepared enemy.

The strategic direction and guidance. The Lebanese unified national and political decision-making regarding the Nahr al-Bared Camp crisis allowed for the development of precise strategic guidance to the LAF in engaging the FAI in the NBC. That guidance was to conduct a decisive operation to deny the FAI from establishing an IS foothold in North Lebanon by defeating the terrorist organization, seizing and regaining control on Nahr al-Bared Camp, and safeguarding civilians.

The operational approach. In the NBC, the LAF structured its campaign plan along four LOEs: diplomatic measures, informational activities, military operations, and economic actions. This operational approach, illustrated in figure 3 (on page 105), outlines the conditions that surrounded the NBC, the LAF LOEs, the supporting operational objectives and tasks, the conditions linked to support the achievement of the LOEs, and the LAF desired end states. These LOEs were related to the overall national goal of defending the homeland and achieving unity of effort.

Diplomatic measures. In addition to garnering national support, the LAF pursued international backing from partners and allied nations. Meanwhile, the FAI relied on the mainstream Arabs and Muslims and aggressively pursued diplomatic overtures to gain Palestinian and Islamic sympathy and support for their cause. During the campaign, the negotiations conducted between the LAF's command and the FAI were very complicated. The LAF began to make its most significant successes in its war against the FAI when it won the political support of the Lebanese

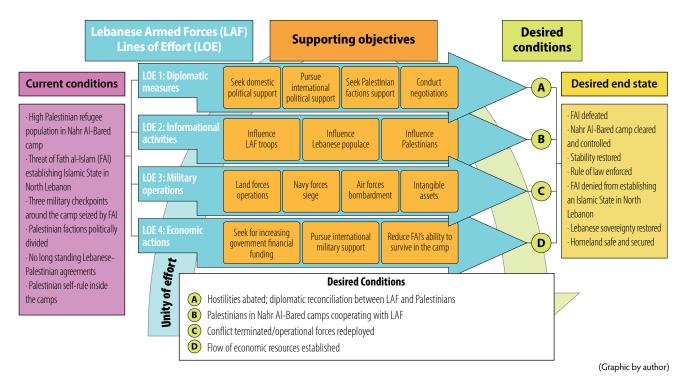


Figure 3. The Lebanese Armed Forces Operational Approach in Nahr Al-Bared Campaign

government and internal political parties, Palestinian factions, and the international community.

Internally, the LAF preserved its national neutrality by leveraging Lebanese religious sectarian sentiments, which kept its actions as a reflection of Lebanese public opinion. In addition, the LAF persuaded the government to make the NBC its national security priority and to focus all its efforts toward defending the Lebanese sovereignty. Second, the LAF was able to overcome the weakness of the long-standing Lebanese-Palestinian agreements and the devised posture among the various Palestinian factions by using a combat-terrorism narrative that enabled the LAF to win their support in its fight against the FAI in the NBC. Lastly, the LAF used its international diplomatic relations to encourage several countries to pledge and assist in its NBC engagement. The international community stood behind the LAF's campaign to defeat terrorism and backed the LAF's fight to deny the FAI from establishing an IS presence in North Lebanon.²⁸

The LAF served as the principal lead in the NBC negotiations, formally and informally, to influence decisions. Many unsuccessful negotiations were held

between the LAF and the FAI, and many unacceptable initiatives that excluded handing over FAI leader al-Absi and its military commander Abou Hureira were submitted to the LAF headquarters from different actors, including those that espoused the disbandment of the FAI terrorist organization and expulsion of its fighters outside Lebanon.²⁹ During the cease-fire period, the LAF conducted civilian evacuation, moving around twenty thousand Palestinians to the neighboring areas in a rate of almost a thousand internally displaced persons a day.³⁰ For the FAI militants, the negotiation period was a time to improve its operational positioning in an attempt to gain a relative advantage.

Informational activities. The LAF was very sensitive to its public image because it reflected the various Lebanese social and religious parties and because the LAF possessed a major role in preserving the nation's unity after the long civil turmoil. During the NBC, the LAF conducted an extensive information campaign to motivate its troops, inspire the Lebanese population to gain broad-based support, and influence the Palestinians in and out of Nahr al-Bared Camp, which induced better circumstances for the military operations.



First, the LAF used its Directorate of Orientation's media assets to address and communicate to its troops both local and international empathy with the LAF, which kept soldiers' motivation high and encouraged their families to support the campaign, even with its sometimes harsh consequences. Second, the LAF publications (the National Defense Magazine and the Lebanese army's magazine) were used as means to reach the Lebanese population.³¹ The magazine capitalized on effective messaging and disseminated information to attain the total support of the Lebanese populace against the FAI terrorist actions. Lastly, the LAF started new programs directed at the Palestinian population in and outside the Nahr al-Bared Camp to discredit the FAI terrorist organization, using explicit messages emphasizing the theme that terrorism was destroying their camp. Meanwhile, the FAI relied on both jihadi web forums and mainstream media to spread its message and intent, promote its ideology, and apply propaganda and pressure, as well as to recruit militants.³²

The LAF information campaign was very successful and stimulated most of the Palestinian refugees and factions to cooperate willingly with the LAF in NBC,

The destruction at the Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp as seen 21 December 2007 north of Tripoli, Lebanon. (Photo courtesy of Frances Mary Guy, former British ambassador, Lebanon, Foreign and Commonwealth Office)

which disrupted FAI terrorist attempts to gain sympathy from its targeted audience.

Military operations. Before the NBC, the LAF was experiencing budget constraints due to the fiscal challenges that the Lebanese government was facing as a consequence of the 2006 Lebanon War. However, when the campaign started, the Lebanese government allocated the necessary equipment as a priority to defeat the better trained and equipped FAI militants in unconventional warfare.

The LAF in the NBC conducted joint operations where the actions of its land, naval, and air operating components were commanded by a joint force commander. In addition to these tangible assets, the intangible capabilities represented by the high morale and esprit de corps of the LAF soldiers were value added in overcoming the deficit in equipment. The LAF key tasks

were to defeat FAI aggression, restore control over the Nahr al-Bared Camp, reinforce stability, and achieve the country's political objective of denying FAI from establishing an IS presence in North Lebanon.

The first phase of the operation was to regain control of the three checkpoints around the camp that the FAI had seized and to begin deploying forces into the theater. The second phase was to set the conditions for the dominate phase by surrounding the camp. The third phase was to conduct a counterattack to occupy the New Camp and then the Old Camp and defeat FAI militants. The focus in the fourth phase was to set the conditions to transition control of the camp to civilian authority.

More than two thousand LAF troops participated in the NBC. Mission command was enabled by the Signal Regiment by establishing communication assets and structures that allowed the joint force commander to command and control his land, naval, and air troops. The land maneuver units consisted of one infantry brigade, four Special Forces regiments (the Rangers Regiment, the Navy SEALs, the Air Assault Regiment, and an intervention regiment), and two tank regiments. The Engineer Regiment carried out the demolition of tunnels and the clearance of improvised explosive devices. The LAF Directorate of Intelligence provided timely and accurate intelligence reports on the situation, the composition and disposition of FAI fighters, and other Palestinian activities in Nahr al-Bared. The two artillery regiments supported the maneuvering troops by delivering indirect fires on FAI fortified shelters. The Logistic Brigade provided sustainment services to the maneuvering units through maintenance and recovery to extend their operational reach in addition to providing personnel services and health service support. The LAF Military Police Brigade was responsible for the protection of the troops and physical assets while moving to and from the area of operation.

The LAF navy's role in the operations was to close the shore and tighten control of the camp. The navy also provided much-needed fire support for land-forces operations and prevented the FAI's infiltration toward the Mediterranean Sea from the west, which denied logistical support from the coast. The navy also provided observation for both indirect fire and close air support.

The LAF air force delivered close air support, reconnaissance, and observation to the joint force commander. The air force modified some of their UH1H

helicopters, transforming them into attack helicopters with 250 kg and 400 kg munitions. The updated helicopters were used for aerial bombardment, targeting the FAI's fortified positions, especially in the Old Camp. In addition, the helicopters conducted casualty evacuation and transported personnel, weapons, and ammunition to and from the area of operation.

The fighting in the NBC was a genuine opportunity for the LAF to gain major combat experience in counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare against a well-armed and well-trained enemy.³³

Economic Actions

In the NBC, the LAF conducted several economic actions that helped shape the operational environment and achieve victory. The LAF sought to increase Lebanese government funding, pursued international military aid, and reduced the FAI's ability to survive in the Nahr Al-Bared Camp. The LAF economic grip on the entire camp hindered FAI access to additional resources and was a major factor in forcing the FAI to negotiate.

First, the LAF had always experienced budget and defense expenditures constraints and had been unable to obtain modern equipment for years. In the NBC, the LAF operated in an entirely different operational environment and required supplies, equipment, weapons, and ammunition. The LAF was able to convince the Lebanese government to increase its military expenditures to meet NBC requirements and to prioritize the defense of the nation against the FAI's credible threats.³⁴

Second, during ongoing operations, the LAF received considerable international military assistance from the United States, Syria, France, the United Arab Emirates, and other countries. This enormous support played a crucial role in bridging the gap between the LAF needs and its available means, providing the LAF with enough resources to win the fight against the FAI. One example of this support was the increase in U.S. military aid to Lebanon (e.g., supplies, equipment, and ammunition) in the 2007 budget of more than seven times that of the previous year.³⁵ Lastly, the LAF influenced the government to put pressure on banks with FAI accounts to stop the latter's financial support.³⁶

The severity of the security situation revealed unequivocally and objectively that noncooperation to support the LAF embracing all instruments of national power was just not an option. The Nahr al-Bared crisis acted as a wake-up call and a red flag for all Palestinian factions. Fearing a similar fate, Palestinian leaders across the political spectrum in all refugee camps began cooperating on security matters in an unprecedented manner.³⁷ In the 2007 NBC, adopting the DIME construct was crucial in achieving the LAF's victory.

Conclusion

In the twenty-first century, the majority of military activities shifted from traditional warfare to stability operations. The global war on terrorism reveals an urgent need for unified national efforts and the strategic implementation of all elements of national power to combat violent extremism. Partnership and interaction between military forces and civilian leadership have become more important to military mission accomplishment. The use of military forces in homeland missions to provide security and stability is more often applied to defend a nation's sovereignty, especially from the rising threat of terrorism.

In this context, the hostile actions by the FAI terrorist organization and the threat of establishing an IS presence in Lebanon in 2007 represented an existential threat to the sovereignty of the country. Taking into consideration the country's singularity, the LAF needed to implement a holistic approach based on the instruments of national power as LOEs and their efficient integration to address the FAI terrorist aggression during the NBC.

The LAF was able to use the DIME framework during the NBC based on the authority conferred by the Lebanese constitution and the National Defense Law that grants the LAF exceptional legal powers in time of war. The LAF demonstrated its unity and cohesion with Lebanese civilian leadership and handled the aforementioned internal conflicts successfully.

The FAI rise in the Nahr al-Bared Camp was a consequence of the failed policies of the Lebanese government toward Palestinian refugees. However, through diplomatic measures, the LAF was able to overcome the weaknesses of long-standing Lebanese-Palestinian agreements. The LAF managed the informational campaign through maintaining a counterpoint to the FAI's biased and disruptive propaganda. The LAF was also able to develop, acquire, and update military equipment to adequately project military force on the NBC. The economic measures used by the LAF restricted the FAI's ability to survive longer inside Nahr al-Bared Camp and obliged the FAI militants to negotiate with the LAF. It was through these integrated efforts that the LAF achieved victory in the NBC and defeated the FAI.

The LAF's focus on domestic security is growing due to the diverse internal security threats that Lebanon continues to face. The presence of large numbers of recently arrived Syrian refugees in Lebanon has exacerbated its complicated demographic situation. Moreover, because the LAF is performing a multitude of homeland security tasks in addition to its central border security missions, it requires maintaining a high level of responsiveness to support law enforcement while staying ready to respond to other external threats and emergencies. With all that said, the LAF's success in the NBC highlights that the integration of the four elements of national power—DIME—as LOEs represents a proven framework to improve the LAF's efficiency and success during future Palestinian camp campaigns, antiterrorism operations, or other missions. Other countries that face internal conflict might be interested in this operational design framework and apply it to their own military operations in support of homeland security.

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