This study is the product of research carried out over a span of five years during my association with the Centre for West Asian and African Studies of the School of International Studies as a research scholar. It was prompted by my interest in the Lebanese conflict right from the days of M.Phil course work.

The involvement of external actors, particularly Israel, Syria and the United States has been a prominent feature of the ongoing conflict in Lebanon. This thesis focuses on the policies and strategies of Israel which has been one of the principal external actors in the conflict.

The Israeli position on Lebanon has largely been shaped by the dynamics of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the role that Lebanon can play in that conflict. In view of the Arab hostility to the Jewish state, it became imperative for Israel to establish links with all those forces in the Arab world that were in conflict with Pan-Arabism. Befriending such forces, Israel calculated, would lead to the creation of a ring of dependable allies and proxies in an otherwise hostile environment. The alliance of minority groups in the Arab World which Israel sought to put together, also had a quasi-ideological dimension. It was in Israel's interest to emphasize the pluralism of the region, the fact that it was composed of a variety of religions, nationalities and races. In such an area the
Jewish state could claim a legitimate place for itself whereas in the homogeneous Arab-Islamic conception it stood out as an alien entity.

Lebanon with its large Christian population was viewed by the Israeli decision-makers as an Arab country most likely to strike a deal with the Jewish state. The very character of Lebanon denied exclusivist Pan-Arab notions. Indeed, the question of Lebanese domestic politics is the starting point of this thesis. Chapter I describes the basis of Lebanese political instability and then goes on the deal with the attitude and orientation of the Maronite Christians towards the Arab World, the West and towards Zionism and Israel. Chapter II deals with relationships that developed between the Jewish community in Palestine and the Lebanese Christians in between the two World Wars. It then analyses the policies and strategies of Israel in the very changed circumstances that obtained following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

Chapter III begins with a discussion of the rise and growth of the Palestine Resistance Movement in Lebanon following the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Until the mid-sixties the Israel-Lebanon border itself had remained completely quiet. The advent of Palestinian commando activity in Southern Lebanon brought in its wake Israeli raids, a phenomena from which Lebanon had been totally free.
The Israeli objectives behind those raids and their impact on a deeply divided Lebanese society has been critically examined in this chapter.

Chapter IV narrates briefly the different phases of the Lebanese Civil War and then goes on to analyse the Israeli response to the different phases of the conflict, particularly to the Syrian military intervention. It also throws light on the more specific aspect of Israeli response i.e., its policies in those area of Southern Lebanon lying close to the Israel-Lebanon frontier.

Chapter V opens with a discussion of the history and ideology of the Israeli Right, particularly that of Herut, the core component of the Likud which came to power for the first time in 1977. The impact of this changeover on Israel's policy towards Lebanon as well as its impact on the domestic politics of Lebanon also forms a part of the discussion. The first Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the 'missile crisis' of 1981 and the escalation of Israel-PLO conflict are analysed against the background of the ideological stance of the Likud government headed by Menachem Begin.

The momentous decision to launch the 1982 war is discussed in Chapter VI. The chapter includes a discussion of the Israeli war objectives and outlines the main military move. The siege of Beirut and the series of intricate Israeli-Syrian-Lebanese-American negotiations
leading to the withdrawal of the PLO and Syrian forces from Beirut are described and analysed. During the initial stages of the war Israel emerged as a winner but within months the situation began to change. By mid-1983 it was clear that Israel had paid an enormous price for certain meagre gains in Lebanon. The aftermath of the war, its divisive repercussions on Israeli society and the long and humiliating process of Israeli withdrawal from the Lebanese quagmire have also been critically dealt with in this chapter.

During the course of investigation I had an opportunity to visit Israel in 1989 to do field research where I had the benefit of consulting different libraries, scholars and administrators who have been or are still associated in one way or another with Israel's Lebanon policy. Although my original plan was to visit Lebanon as well, severe political upheavals there proved to be an obstacle. I had an opportunity, however, to interact with a number of Lebanese scholars and politicians during my visit to the Centre for Lebanese Studies, Oxford in 1989. Efforts have been made to make a judicious use of the available primary and secondary source materials on the field.

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(JAWAID IQBAL)