

## Comments for Maison du Futur

Thank you. It is an honor to share this platform with President Gemayel and it is a privilege to be with you today. I am especially grateful to Sam Manassa and my dear friend, Hassan Mneineh, for creating this opportunity for me.

I welcome this opportunity to return to Lebanon. My only other of visit was in 1983 when President Gemayel was in office. It is apparent that many changes have occurred in Lebanon in the intervening 34 years.

I am also glad to be involved with the Konrad Adenauer Institute. As a young American Army office in Germany in the early sixties when Dr. Adenauer was chancellor, I developed a strong admiration for him and his brilliant leadership in post-war Europe.

I appreciate the invitation from the Maison du Futur. Think tanks have an important role play in free societies. They provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and provide a place where collaboration occurs to make individual ideas stronger.

One of the most successful think tanks in the United States is the American Enterprise Institute in Washington. It should be noted that it's president for many years and a dominant individual in its development was a Lebanese-American named Bill Baroody. Under his leadership, AEI reached the zenith of its influence. It has had a significant impact on the policies of several administrations over the past

four decades and has attracted our leading intellectuals as its scholars.

Bill Baroody is just one example of how Lebanese Americans have enriched American society. They have excelled in entertainment, in government and politics, in business and industry and in our military. Two of the finest military leaders I've ever known are John Abizaid and George Joulwan.

More than a dozen American states have cities named Lebanon and festivals, where Lebanese culture and traditions are celebrated, have become very popular throughout the America countryside.

I look forward to our discussion of interventions. This is an important subject, always in the forefront of public debate. I look forward to benefiting from the wisdom that is attending this conference.

It has been suggested to me that I talk about the process that leads to U.S. intervention and maybe provide some understanding of why it seems so complicated.

I hope it does not sound immodest for me as an American to point out that whenever there is trouble in the world the question always arises, "what action is the United States prepared to take." The answer is never easy. We have a complicated system for reaching governmental decisions.

I take notice of a comment in the read ahead material for the conference provided by the Maison du Futur. “many western observers have noted the paradoxical character of the Arab complaint about US policy: Washington is criticized for intervening when it does and equally criticized and condemned for its absence when it does not.”

Our founding fathers were suspicious of governmental power as a result of their experience as British colonists. As a consequence, they developed a system of government that made it difficult to exercise governmental power.

This difficulty in exercising power is especially true in international relations and national security. The issue of who has the initiative in foreign policy has been debated since the founding of our republic. Congress was given the power to declare war and to control spending, but the President is the commander in chief of the armed forces and has traditionally had great latitude in exercising this power. Most of our conflicts in modern times have been conducted without declarations of war, but frequently with Congressional resolutions authorizing the use the force.

On the other hand, we have had a recent example of the limited power of the President, as commander-in-chief. President Obama came to office with the promise to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, but the power of the purse exercised by the Congress prevented him to achieving this goal in eight years.

National security and foreign policy require a 24 hour, seven day a week commitment. The executive branch is

more suited for this kind of focus giving it a leg up in the competition for dominance.

It has been my privilege to serve as both Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs. I have learned that there is difficulty among many of friends and allies in understanding the need for a component to oversee relations between branches of the same government, but therein lies an explanation for our system of separated powers. Many have difficulty understanding this division of power.

The issue of intervention is especially timely for Americans today. In the United States, we are marking the 100th anniversary of America's entry into World War I. Our founding fathers admonished us to avoid foreign entanglements. Our entry into World War I was an historic break with this advice and laid the foundation for a future role in world affairs.

Public sentiment always has a paramount part in interventions. We entered World War I in 1917, after Woodrow Wilson was re-elected in 1916 under the slogan, "he kept of out of war" and the most popular song of the day was called, "I didn't raise my son to be a soldier." But German behavior turned sentiment around and the nation rallied to a the tune of a new song called "Over There."

We learned an important lesson about interventions in World War I. We learned that it is not enough to win a war. You must also win the peace that follows. Our failure to win

the peace after World War I laid the foundation for another war less than a quarter of a century later.

When war broke out in Europe in the 1930's, President Roosevelt faced a determined isolationist movement in the United States. It was especially formidable because it was led by Charles Lindbergh, a true American hero.

Again, our eventual enemies succeeded in inflaming American sentiment with an attack on Pearl Harbor and a declaration of war against the United States from Germany. Public sentiment shifted and the United States mobilized for war.

This time we followed up our victories over Japan and Germany with a committed rebuilding program including the Marshall Plan. As a result, we have avoided conflict on the European continent since the end of World War II. Our former enemies, Germany and Japan, are among our strongest allies and trading partners.

In 1950, the United States intervened in Korea under the U.N. flag. After three years, the war was fought to a stalemate and an armistice was established, but a state of war still exists between North and South.

When Dwight Eisenhower was elected in 1953, the hope that would end hostilities in Korea was an issue that propelled him to a landslide win. We entered an eight year period when interventions were cautiously avoided. Interestingly the only intervention that President Eisenhower approved during this period was a short entry into Lebanon at the request of

President Chamoun in 1958. Earlier President Eisenhower had resisted a military response from France and the United Kingdom to Egypt's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal.

President Eisenhower also resisted strong demands for the U.S. to intervene in Vietnam in 1954 after French garrison at Dien Bien Phu fell. In 1956, he also resisted demands for U.S. intervention in Hungary after the Soviet brutally suppressed a revolt by freedom fighters.

General Eisenhower was an accomplished strategist. This talent allowed him to think two moves ahead and he was the most reluctant interventionists of post war American presidents.

President Eisenhower's successor, John F. Kennedy, came to office with an inaugural address that captured the interest of the American public. One of the most memorable passages in this speech provided the intellectual foundation for a larger role in the world and our eventual ill-fated intervention in Vietnam.

President Kennedy said, "let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to insure the survival and success of liberty."

When President Kennedy was in office, I was a young officer in the United States Army. About a year after this speech, I recall attending a classified briefing at Fort Benning, Georgia where we were advised that President Kennedy had ordered the establishment of a military advisory group in

Vietnam with a strength of 16,000. We were told that the commitment would rely heavily on young Army officers. This was the beginning of a slippery slope that would result a half a million Americans in Vietnam and the loss of more than 50,000 American lives.

The tragic experience in Vietnam left the United States with the influence of a condition called the Vietnam syndrome. This condition could be defined as a public aversion to American overseas military involvement following the domestic upheaval associated with the Vietnam war. This led to a less interventionist U.S. foreign policy.

A major break with this reluctance came under President Reagan in 1982 when we twice committed Marines in an effort to stabilize the situation in Lebanon. A tragic terrorist attack on the barracks that housed the Marines undercut public and Congressional support for this mission and American forces were withdrawn.

More recent interventions are well-known to all. In 1991, President George H.W. Bush assembled a 35 nation coalition that successfully removed Iraqi forces under Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. This was followed by the extended imposition of a no-fly zone over much of Iraq.

On September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda killed 3000 Americans in attacks in New York and Washington. I remember it well. I was on duty in the Pentagon when the attacks occurred. The attacks had been planned and launched from Afghanistan leading to a decision to attack the

source in October of 2001. As the press frequently reminds us our troops are still there more than 15 years later.

A global war on terrorism also led to a return to Iraq to successfully remove Saddam Hussein from power and this war continues as part of the cacophony a conflict that grips the Middle East today.

For the past eight years, the United States has been led by a president with a strong aversion for intervention and the results are apparent to all of us. A blank slate exists with the new President of the United States and I join you in standing by to see what the future may hold.

It has been said that understanding history is essential to understanding current and future events. I hope this review has been productive.

As Winston Churchill said, “those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”