

Elections in Lebanon: Implications for Washington, Beirut, and Damascus

by [David Schenker \(/experts/david-schenker\)](/experts/david-schenker)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Brief Analysis

In the months leading up to the November 23 end of Lebanese president Emile Lahoud's term in office, political factions have been vying to choose the country's next chief executive. These elections pit candidates affiliated with the pro-West March 14 majority bloc against the Syrian-Iranian allied opposition led by Hizbballah. For both Washington and the March 14 majority, the outcome of the elections is critical. At stake is the future of UN Security Council Resolution 1559, the disarmament of Lebanese militias, and Resolution 1757, the international tribunal investigating the assassination of former Lebanese premiere Rafiq Hariri. In a larger sense, the election of a compromise candidate could effectively end the momentum of the Cedar Revolution and bring Syria back to Lebanon.

To discuss the Lebanese elections, The Washington Institute invited Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman, Tony Badran, and David Schenker to address a special policy forum on November 27, 2007. Due to a technical failure, David Schenker's remarks are not included here.

Jeffrey Feltman has been the U.S. ambassador to Lebanon since July 2004. Prior to his appointment in Beirut, he served as the Coalition Provisional Authority office in Irbil, Iraq, and as acting principal officer at the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem. He joined the Foreign Service in 1986, and has also served in Tel Aviv, Tunisia, and Haiti. Ambassador Feltman joined the discussion by teleconference from his office in Beirut.

Tony Badran is a fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, specializing in Syrian and Lebanese politics. He runs the well-known Lebanon-Syria political blog [Across the Bay \(http://beirut2bayside.blogspot.com/\)](http://beirut2bayside.blogspot.com/), as well as [www.OpenSyria.org \(http://www.opensyria.org/News/Default.aspx\)](http://www.opensyria.org), a blog tracking developments in the Syrian opposition. He is a frequent contributor to the Daily Star.

David Schenker is a senior fellow and director of the [Arab politics program \(http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateI03.php?SID=1\)](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateI03.php?SID=1) at The Washington Institute. ❖

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