

Term
March 14 Alliance
12.12.2006

Definition

The term "March 14 Alliance" refers to an anti-Syrian coalition of parties and independents in the Lebanese government. The Alliance has become one of the most significant political coalitions in Lebanon, and it includes Christian Maronite, Druze and Sunni Muslim leaders.¹ This Alliance makes up the majority of the current Lebanese government, headed by PM Fouad Siniora.

Background

The March 14 Alliance was formed during public demonstrations known as the Cedar Revolution, which took place one month after the assassination of Lebanon's former Prime Minister, Rafiq Hariri (02/14/05). As Syria was suspected to have backed the assassination,² demonstrations were held in protest of Syria's 29-year long occupation of Lebanon. The Alliance was named after the date on which the Syrian troops withdrew from Lebanon, which is perceived as the major achievement of the Cedar Revolution.

The March 14 Alliance includes a variety of religious and ethnic groups, which traditionally do not share the same political agenda. However, the groups united in pursuit of their common interest in the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon.

In the aftermath of the Syrian withdrawal, the March 14 Alliance remained unified mainly around three objectives:

- To reduce the Syrian interference in Lebanese politics;
- To prevent Hizbullah from taking over the Lebanese political system, as it would destabilize the vulnerable political status quo and consequently increase Iranian influence on the country;³ and

¹ The main parties which constitute the coalition are: Current for the Future (party led by Saad Hariri, the late PM's son); Progressive Socialist Party (an officially non-sectarian party, led by a Druze leader Walid Jumblatt); Lebanese Forces (an officially secular party, however mostly followed by Christian Maronites); Phalangist Party (a Christian Maronite party led by Pierre Gemayel, prior to his assassination); National Liberal Party (an officially secular party, promoting the freedom of religions; mostly followed by Christians).

² A large part of the Lebanese public opinion believes that Syria is involved in the assassination of former PM Rafiq Hariri (see [Le Monde Diplomatique](#), 03/01/05). Furthermore, the Siniora government has recently approved the establishment of an international tribunal to try the suspects of the Hariri assassination.

³ In the context of the street riots in Lebanon (12/06), the March 14 Alliance seeks to prevent the collapse of the Siniora government; to avoid concessions allowing the Hizbullah to obtain more cabinet seats, which would give the Hizbullah the status of a "blocking third" in Parliament, to enable Syria's direct influence on Lebanese politics; to replace Lebanon's pro-Syrian Christian president Emile Lahoud; to set up an international tribunal to try suspects in the Hariri killing; and to reach a national consensus over the bilateral relations with Syria (see [The Washington Institute](#), 12/04/06).

- To establish an international tribunal to try the suspects of the Hariri assassination.⁴

The activity of the March 14 Alliance reflects the polarization within the Lebanese political sphere. On the one hand, the March 14 Alliance is identified with the US and Saudi Arabian interests, whereas the opposition pays allegiance to Syria and Iran.⁵

End.

⁴ See: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=20690&Cr=leban&Cr1>.

⁵ See: [The Guardian](#), 11/23/06.