

PJ-ABY-784

91018

PROPOSED ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON

**Report based on the USAID-sponsored Workshop on Lebanon
held in Washington, DC on 17-18 June 1993**

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**Submitted to:
U.S. Agency for International Development
Near East Bureau**

11 August 1993

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INTRODUCTION

In the wake of a protracted civil war that left Lebanon's governmental institutions paralyzed, a new government is beginning the task of institutional reconstruction. While the magnitude of the challenge can hardly be overstated, a unique combination of circumstances creates real opportunities for the success of this endeavor.

Over the past two years, substantial progress has been made toward the implementation of the Ta'if Agreement, which most Lebanese now consider an acceptable blueprint for the reconstruction of the Lebanese polity. The government has expanded its authority over many areas, and disarmed and disbanded most militias. In August-September 1992, elections for the Chamber of Deputies were held for the first time in twenty years. While the electoral process was flawed and its significance diminished by a Christian boycott, the elections nevertheless revitalized the political process. They enabled many figures who had become active in Lebanese politics during the last few years to be formally integrated into an official, representative institution. The existence of a new parliamentary elite provides the Chamber of Deputies with an opportunity to carve out an important role for itself.

The appointment of Rafiq Hariri as Prime Minister in October 1992 created further momentum for the rebuilding of the state. Prime Minister Hariri assumed office riding a wave of popular optimism, and he immediately identified the strengthening of state institutions as one of his main priorities. His appointment thus provides Lebanon with a window of opportunity to consolidate a still fragile political order.

To help carry out the task of political reconstruction, the Government of Lebanon has requested assistance from the U.S. Government. It is against this backdrop that USAID is considering the feasibility of activities intended to strengthen governmental institutions in Lebanon. During preparation for the design of an appropriate project two areas of intervention were identified—the central control agencies of the executive bureaucracy and the parliament. These areas of intervention were selected for the two following reasons:

- 1. The revitalization of Lebanon's devastated economy cannot take place in the absence of a proper administrative and institutional framework.*

Although the policies followed by the current government indicate a strong preference for the *laissez-faire*, market-oriented economy that traditionally has characterized Lebanon, economic growth cannot occur unless government can carry out basic tasks, including the maintenance of order, infrastructure repairs, and the provision of critical social services. As it stands, however, the public administration cannot perform effectively these functions because it is too weak, disorganized, inefficient, and penetrated by outside interests.

2. For the Lebanese polity to be reconstructed on a sounder and stronger basis, the Parliament must be strengthened.

In the pre-civil war period, the Lebanese Parliament was not a powerful institution. It was a place where speeches, not decisions, were made. Policies were agreed upon elsewhere—in the Presidential Palace and in the mountain resorts and urban salons where the leading representatives of Lebanon's various sects met in order to reach consensus on matters of public policy.

The weakness of the parliament, combined with the absence of any alternative national forum for the discussion of policy issues, encouraged Lebanese to fall back on confessional, localistic, and personalistic channels and networks to participate in public life. This "retreat into traditionalism," however, exacerbated the already fragmented nature of Lebanese society, and discouraged the emergence of a cohesive, unifying national identity. In this context, strengthening the Parliament represents a necessary step toward the weakening of sectarianism and parochialism, and toward the emergence of a more integrated society and polity.

Fortunately, a combination of factors currently creates a unique opportunity for governmental reconstruction in Lebanon. These factors include:

- The expansion of governmental authority in the country, including the disbanding and disarmament of most militias.
- Prime Minister Hariri's commitment to administrative reform, and the steps he already has taken in that direction.
- The existence of genuine popular support for rebuilding the state. The population is aware that, in the long run, only a stronger and more effective state can provide the framework within which they can lead peaceful and productive lives.
- The Parliament is operating and is the scene of active debates. Recent elections to it may have been partially flawed, but they did integrate into this institution individuals and groups that formerly had only limited access to the institutions of the state.

In order to obtain a more thorough understanding of the constraints and opportunities surrounding governmental reconstruction in Lebanon, AID sponsored a workshop on Lebanon, which was held at the Washington office of the Democratic Institutions Support (DIS) project, on 17-18 June 1993. This report is based on that workshop. It draws heavily on information presented by the four specialists on Lebanese affairs and on AID officers and contract staff who attended the workshop. The names of participants are contained in Appendix A.

To effectively support the efforts of the GOL, AID will need to proceed on the basis of an understanding of the general political context in which institution strengthening

activities will take place. To provide such basic information is a primary goal of this report. Suggestions presented within it are the results of discussions and observations made by workshop participants. Those suggestions are intended to assist AID make the final selection of the agencies to be targeted and the type of activities to be undertaken. The workshop participants endorsed the approach taken by AID in designing the project. It supported both AID's decision to further discuss with GOL officials the goals and objectives of the project and AID's efforts to coordinate with other donors in order to avoid duplication.

SECTION I
POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS ON THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING
OF THE EXECUTIVE BUREAUCRACY AND THE PARLIAMENT

In August-September 1992, almost three years after the signing of the Ta'if Agreement and two years after the civil war came to an end, parliamentary elections took place in Lebanon, for the first time in twenty years. These elections were followed by the appointment of Rafiq Hariri as Prime Minister in October 1992. Most Lebanese viewed Hariri's appointment as a positive step. Hopes were raised that it would soon result in an improvement of economic conditions and a normalization of political life. Capitalizing on this new wave of confidence, Hariri quickly moved to tackle the country's two main post war problems—economic and political reconstruction—on which very little progress had been made since the Ta'if Agreement.

It is in this context that the Lebanese government requested AID assistance for strengthening the administrative capacity of the executive bureaucracy and the parliament. Should AID proceed with such a project, it will need an understanding of political constraints that limit the effectiveness of the executive bureaucracy and that of the Chamber of Deputies. This section describes the most salient of those constraints.

A. Constraints on the Executive Bureaucracy

Constraints on the executive bureaucracy can be divided into two broad categories: external constraints, which emerge from the overall political context in which the central bureaucracy operates; and internal constraints, which are created by factors internal to the central bureaucracy.

External Constraints

1. Fluidity of the Political Context

Despite the many successful steps that have been taken over the last few months to restore order and institutionalize political life, politics in Lebanon remains very fluid. Therefore, during the implementation of the project, AID will have to remain very sensitive to the constant evolution in the balance among Lebanon's major players. The relationship between the Council of Ministers, the Presidency, and the Chamber of Deputies is in a process of evolution. Disagreements between these three institutions and the men who control them could result in political deadlock. Thus, should it decide to provide assistance, AID will have to operate in a context in which there is still a considerable amount of uncertainty regarding actual lines of authority among the key players, and among and within institutions.

It bears emphasizing here that the constitutional guidelines set in Ta'if constitute only an approximate guide to the actual distribution of power in a country in which unwritten rules always have been more relevant than written ones, and in which the office traditionally has been less important than the office holder. In a political system that remains in a state of flux, the actual roles and power of key actors are still being defined and negotiated. In the end, each institution's real influence will be determined by the men who control it.

It is therefore not surprising to find out, for instance, that the actual power wielded by current Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri exceeds by far the prerogatives formally granted to his office by the Ta'if Agreement. (This is largely due to the aura that surrounds Hariri as an individual, to his wealth, international connections, etc.) Other key actors—most notably President Elias Hrawi and Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri—are also striving to carve out a bigger role for themselves and their institutions. Similarly, the Council of Ministers has not yet proven able to become the single most powerful decision-making structure in the government, as envisaged by Ta'if. This balance of power could change suddenly and dramatically. It is not clear, for instance, whether Prime Minister Hariri can institutionalize the power that he has been exerting, or whether Hariri's successor could ever be as influential as Hariri currently is.

2. The Government's Vulnerability to the Regional Situation

Governmental reconstruction in Lebanon is all the more difficult because its future is inextricably tied to the evolution of Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. For example, Israel's decision to expel some 400 Palestinians to southern Lebanon in December 1992 demonstrated Lebanon's vulnerability to any resurgence of tensions between Israel and the Palestinians. That vulnerability was underscored again by Israeli attacks on Lebanon in the summer of 1993. Given the presence of an estimated 300,000 Palestinians in Lebanon, most of whom live in refugee camps, any event that impacts upon them has the potential to destabilize on the country's already fragile confessional balance.

3. A Sluggish Economy and Persistent Socioeconomic Problems

Lebanon's economy remains very sluggish and hopes of a rapid economic upturn, which were running high when Prime Minister Hariri assumed office in October 1992, have failed to materialize. Substantial aid from the Gulf states, or from Western donors, has not been forthcoming. Similarly, funds from the expatriate Lebanese community have not yet returned to Lebanon. Little domestic investment has taken place. Unemployment is high, inflation is rampant, and the price of basic commodities continues to rise.

These poor economic conditions affect the process of governmental reconstruction in three main ways:

(a) Government employees are paid so little that they must find ways of supplementing their salaries, which promotes administrative corruption. Because most Lebanese must pay bribes and kick-backs to obtain the permits, licenses, and other services that they need, they feel frustrated, exploited, and humiliated by the bureaucracy. This

situation complicates the task of governmental reconstruction because it constantly undermines trust in the state's institutions.

(b) Because of poor economic conditions, entire groups in society are being impoverished and are reacting politically. In late April, 1993, the Hariri government was confronted with its first major socioeconomic crisis when school teachers and professors at the Lebanese University staged a series of strikes demanding better paid and working conditions. Similar grumblings can be heard from other professional groupings, including magistrates. Unless the economy improves, no government can consolidate power.

(c) Poor socioeconomic conditions and the slow pace of reconstruction undermine the credibility of governmental institutions. Meanwhile, other groups and organizations are taking advantage of their demonstrated ability to deliver much needed social services to expand their influence, which in turn further undermines the stature and coherence of governmental bodies.

Thus, the link between economic growth and political reconstruction is clearly a dialectical one. There can be no economic revival without a normalization of political life and a rebuilding of the country's institutional and administration structure. At the same time, however, some progress must take place on the economic front for political confidence to be restored and institution-building to proceed.

4. Limited Sovereignty and Government Control

The executive bureaucracy is inherently constrained by the limited scope of the authority it can exert over certain geographic areas and aspects of government. Four such limits must be emphasized.

(a) The Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon will continue to compromise governmental reconstruction, not only because it prevents the Lebanese government from operating there, but because it undermines the legitimacy of the central government.

(b) Syria, whose role in Lebanon exceeds that provided for in the Ta'if Agreement, currently has some 35,000 troops deployed in the country. Ironically, this heavy military presence both constrains and facilitates governmental reconstruction. While it undermines the government's claim to be the ultimate source of authority in the country, it also plays a decisive role in maintaining public order without which reconstruction of the government's institutions cannot take place.

The fear of Syrian military intervention acts as a powerful deterrent on many groups which might otherwise be tempted to disrupt the political process. In fact, some Lebanese officials have expressed fears that, should Syria have to redeploy its forces to the Bekaa Valley or pull them out of Lebanon entirely as part of a negotiated settlement with Israel, the Lebanese government could lose control over the security situation in the country.

(c) In addition to its strong military presence, Syria also influences the Lebanese political system. Top Lebanese officials make regular trips (weekly, in the case of most ministers) to the Syrian capital to confer on various matters. Any assistance program to Lebanon must take into account the limited autonomy and freedom of maneuver of the executive bureaucracy in Beirut.

(d) Finally, although the Hariri government can boast of substantial achievements regarding the disbanding of militias, the expansion of governmental authority, and the revitalization of many ministries, Hizballah still has not been disarmed, and is unlikely to relinquish its weapons until an Israeli withdrawal of southern Lebanon is arranged. For its part, Israel insists on the disarmament of Hizballah and the cessation of all resistance activities in the south as a precondition for pulling its troops out.

5. Christian Fears of Marginalization

A key obstacle to governmental reconstruction and the normalization of Lebanese political life is the fear by Christians of their political marginalization. Christians chose not to participate in the elections and currently feel excluded from the politics of key national institutions, in which their most important leaders are, for the most part, not represented.

Two factors render problematical the reintegration of the Christian community into the political process: The community's demoralization and its internal fragmentation.

Many Christians interpret political developments in Lebanon over the last two years as a proof that, following fifteen years of civil war, they have lost out to the Muslim majority. Some believe that the current government is insensitive to their needs and aspirations. More than ever, these Christian critics of the government view themselves as a beleaguered minority whose future in Lebanon is bleak.

Demoralization of the Christian community could negatively affect efforts to rebuild the state. Historically, minorities which come to feel that they are fighting for their very survival in a hostile environment have proven to be capable of violent reactions. The despair that currently prevails among Christians also has the indirect consequence of discouraging repatriation of capital and human resources by the (predominantly Christian) Lebanese expatriate community.

Compounding the negative effects of Christian demoralization is the pronounced disorganization and growing political fragmentation in their ranks.

- The "historic leaders" of the Christian community are either dead (Pierre and Bashir Gemayel, Camille Chamoun, Suleiman Franjeh) or in exile (Michel Aoun, Raymond Edde).
- The remaining Christian leaders in Lebanon are divided along both personal and ideological lines, and between those who refuse any compromise with Syria and

those who accept to work within the confines of the Syrian presence and influence in the country.

- Although the Church still enjoys unrivalled prestige among the Maronites, it has been unwilling or unable to play a strong political leadership role.
- In early 1993, for the first time in its 56 years of existence, the Kata'ib (Phalange) Party, traditionally the main political organization among the Maronites, split into two rival factions.

Christian fears of marginalization and their internal fragmentation present challenges for the process of reconstructing the state. The reabsorption of Christian leaders into governmental institutions, possibly through the next round of parliamentary elections, could contribute substantially both to reducing the fear of marginalization and to the emergence of more coherent leadership, thereby paving the way for a more effective Christian contribution to the reconstruction of the state and the country.

6. Public Skepticism and Low Opinion of Senior Public Officials

Although few in Lebanon doubt Hariri's sincerity, and although the Prime Minister's discourse about the need to modernize the state and root out corruption is in general well received, the public doubts that the government can deliver on its promises. Hariri's image, while still positive on the whole, has nevertheless deteriorated recently. Very few cabinet members enjoy real popular support. Most of them were barely elected to the Parliament eight months ago. Governmental efforts to restore confidence in the state and its officials, in sum, has not yet overcome residual skepticism and distrust of politicians.

7. Powerful Groups Opposing Administrative Reform

History suggest that efforts to modernize the Lebanese state will be an uphill battle. Vested interests have long opposed strengthening the state and makings its institutions more accountable. Previous attempts at administrative reform—including the most significant one, undertaken under the Presidency of Fuad Shihab (1958-1964)—were derailed by the groups and politicians who stood to lose the most from the weakening of corruption and nepotism. In a country where not all the weapons that fueled the civil war have been confiscated, many actors have the potential to at least delay the normalization of political life.

8. The Amorphous Nature of the Pro-reform Movement

While those who stand to lose from administrative reform are often well organized and influential, pro-reform constituencies lack an organized political base. Support for reform may be widespread within the population, but it is also amorphous.

In this respect there is a difference between the current situation and former President Fuad Shihab's efforts to modernize the Lebanese state. The absence of an organized political base makes the present task more difficult. Since the incumbent Prime

Minister cannot rely on any single institution to mobilize support for the reform agenda, he has attempted to fill the administration with his own nominees. This practice, however, has made him vulnerable to charges of nepotism and hypocrisy. Many Lebanese find themselves arguing that, while the Prime Minister claims to aim at the elimination of cronyism and clientelism, he resorts to these very same practices to consolidate his personal control over the state.

Internal Constraints

Several factors internal to the executive bureaucracy hinder its effective functioning. Most of these constraints are straightforward and need no elaboration:

- Many agencies are disorganized or inoperative.
- Administrative corruption is widespread.
- The executive bureaucracy contains scores of individuals (such as the former militia leaders the absorbed into the state in 1991-92) who are often hostile to administrative reforms and will try to block them.
- The unity of many institutions is still untested, and several (including the army, which was reunified in 1991) could once again split along sectarian lines.
- Turf wars among the various branches of government and the three members of Lebanon's "troika" could immobilize the executive bureaucracy.
- Because many officials—from senior civil servants down to the lower level staff—were appointed through the intervention of political forces external to the bureaucracy, their loyalty is to these forces, not to the state. This phenomenon weakens the bureaucracy as an institution, and makes it very vulnerable to manipulation by outside interests.

The two most important constraints on the effective functioning of the bureaucracy, however, are the need to maintain a confessional balance and to accommodate the respective interests and ambitions of Lebanon's "troika."

Because the balancing of confessional interests remains a decisive criterion in the allocation of civil service posts, appointments cannot be decided exclusively on the basis of competence. Another limit on merit-based appointments is the tendency of Prime Minister Hariri, President Hrawi, and Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri to fill state institutions with their supporters. The importance of clientelism and sectarian balance was displayed most recently on 20 May 1993, when 72 key managerial posts in the bureaucracy were filled. Although many of the appointees can boast of substantial credentials, Lebanese (including a few ministers) complained that these senior civil servants were selected primarily as a result of protracted negotiations between the President, the Prime Minister, and the Speaker.

B. Constraints on the Parliament

As in the case of the executive bureaucracy, constraints on the effective functioning of the Parliament can be divided into two categories: external and internal.

External Constraints

The single most important constraint on the Parliament is its limited legitimacy and credibility. The following reasons explain why the Parliament elected in August-September 1992 is not seen as fully representative of Lebanese public opinion.

- The decision to go ahead with elections was made in disregard for the existence of a broad, cross-confessional movement of opposition to the timing of those elections. Many Lebanese did not believe that free and fair elections could take place given the prevailing conditions in the country.
- The leaders and organizations that are most representative of Maronite public opinion called for a boycott of the elections, and that decision was widely followed by the Maronite rank and file.
- The conditions in which the elections took place were not ideal. The electoral campaign was not extensive; the media was officially forbidden from discussing electoral issues; and electoral districts were gerrymandered. While some MPs represent districts with hundreds of thousands of people, others represent no more than a few thousand people. Reports of irregularities also marred the elections.
- The turnout was low. In the country as a whole, about one third of the eligible population voted. In some predominantly Christian areas, unofficial estimates indicate that as little as five percent of the population bothered to show up at the polls. But participation did vary substantially from one region to another. In the south it was high, reflecting political mobilization of the Shiite community and its desire to gain broader access to the formal institutions of government.

Internal Constraints

1. Penetration of the Parliament by Outside Interests

The political autonomy of the Chamber of Deputies is limited by outside influence and by the executive branch's leverage over parliament. In Lebanon it is possible to belong simultaneously to the cabinet and the parliament. Because the 30 ministers of the current cabinet are all members of the 128-member parliament, the executive branch has this potential source of leverage. A simple calculation indicates that if the cabinet is unified the approval of a bill submitted by the executive branch to the Parliament requires only that each cabinet member be supported by 1.5 members of parliament.

2. Localistic and Sectarian Power Bases of Most MPs

The appeal of most MPs does not extend beyond their sect and region of origin. This phenomenon creates two major impediments on the parliament's ability to function as an effective forum for the discussion of national issues:

- Because MPs represent very narrow local and sectarian interests, those interests take precedence over national issues.
- MPs have a strong incentive to try to consolidate their already narrow base of support by appealing to religious prejudices and fears.

3. Political Fragmentation within Parliament

Each political party represented in Parliament has only a handful of Deputies. The political party with the largest representation in Parliament commands less than ten percent of the Chamber's total membership. A majority of parliamentarians are independents. Within most of the political parties parliamentary discipline is weak. In sum, there is a dearth of organizations within parliament that could serve as bases for the construction of sizeable and relatively coherent, lasting coalitions. Coalition-building is a difficult and lengthy process. Moreover, because of the weakness of political parties and intra-parliamentary coalitions, personalistic, clientelistic, and sectarian considerations take precedence over other evaluative criteria for public policies.

4. Changed Composition of Parliament

One obstacle to the parliament's credibility is the absence of prominent Maronite leaders in its ranks. Most of those Maronites who were elected to fill seats allotted to their sect lack support from within their own community. As a result, parliamentary decisions are not fully legitimate in the eyes of many Christians.

Although they do not operate as a cohesive bloc, Islamic activists, who entered parliament for the first time in the 1992 election, control 15 seats in Parliament (eight for Hizballah alone). This inevitably creates problems of adjustment, both for those newcomers to parliament, and for groups and individuals who were accustomed to Islamic activism being primarily an extra-parliamentary phenomenon.

SECTION II IMPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE

The project paper for the governmental institutions strengthening component of assistance to Lebanon calls for enhancing the institutional capacities of Parliament and the central control agencies of the executive branch. The consensus of the workshop was that the goal of the project, which is to assist in the reconstruction of the Lebanese economy and polity, could be attained by assistance to Parliament and the executive branch. Workshop participants recommended a focused approach within the executive bureaucracy.

Specifically, they recommended that the General Disciplinary Council not be targeted for assistance, as it is less central to the process of re-establishing administrative capacity. Moreover, it was recommended that assistance not be provided to the National Institute of Public Administration, which reports to the Civil Service Commission, nor to the Directorate of Research and Guidance, which is responsible to the Central Inspection Commission. These two organizations were seen as being less capable of making an immediate contribution to the overall strengthening of the civil service than the parent commissions to which they report. If the project were to be expanded at a later stage, however, these two bodies might then become appropriate targets for assistance to strengthen their institutional capacities.

Participants in the workshop sought to evaluate from several different perspectives the advantages and disadvantages of providing assistance to Parliament and the central control agencies of the executive branch. In addition to normal AID criteria for project evaluation, including feasibility, sustainability, etc., participants in the workshop felt that other criteria would be of particular importance for this project. These special criteria are discussed briefly below. Following that discussion is a presentation of information on the relevant institutions, the types of assistance proposed to enhance their capacities, and arguments for and against such assistance.

A. Intervention Criteria of Special Relevance

1. Ease of Implementation

Because AID does not have a mission in Lebanon and because of restrictions on travel there by US nationals, project implementation and monitoring will be particularly difficult. Actions envisioned should, therefore, not be dependent for their success on intensive and/or extensive management by AID.

2. Political Balance

The need for political balance, as noted in the project paper, was strongly reaffirmed by workshop participants. Both the executive bureaucracy and the Parliament should receive

assistance. Should the latter be ignored, the Speaker, many other MPs, and leaders of certain confessions might look upon U.S. intervention as an attempt to alter the balance of power among the state's various institutions and among the country's confessions. It is also important that any actions considered not have an effect on the distribution of power between confessions.

3. Speed of Implementation

The appointment of Rafiq Hariri has provided Lebanon with a window of opportunity to consolidate a still fragile political order. It is important that the Lebanese Prime Minister be able to show that rapid progress is being made on government rebuilding and economic reconstruction. Thus, AID intervention should be able to yield fast results. Projects with long germination periods should be avoided.

4. Counterpart commitment and recurring costs

Essential to the success of any activity is the willingness and ability of the GOL to assume responsibility for recurring costs engendered by that activity and to ensure the provision of counterparts who are committed to successful implementation. Because of the limited capacities of the state and the many demands on its resources, projects that impose heavy requirements to meet recurring costs should be avoided.

B. Proposed Assistance for the Executive Bureaucracy

The approach proposed in the project paper is to strengthen the executive bureaucracy by enhancing the administrative capacities of three key central control agencies. That approach was endorsed by participants in the workshop, with the proviso that assistance be targeted on the Civil Service Commission (CSC), the Central Inspection Commission (CIC), and the Bureau of Accounts (BOA).

1. Control Agencies of the Executive Branch

These agencies are under the direct responsibility of the Council of Ministers and the Prime Minister (see Appendix B). They were created in the wake of the 1958 civil war, when President Fuad Shihab embarked on a major reform program designed to strengthen the state. Shihab's intention was to have these agencies operate as watchdogs of the bureaucracy, and to use them to upgrade personnel selection, training, and promotion. Thus, these control agencies were the key to Shihab's goal of increasing the public administration's professionalism, competence, and accountability.

Unfortunately, the control agencies failed to live up to Shihab's expectations. They progressively fell into disuse, and broke down completely after the civil war commenced. Prime Minister Hariri's project to reinvigorate these control agencies represent an attempt to emulate Shihab's strategy, some thirty five years later.

The three control agencies that have the potential to make the greatest contribution to reconstruction of the civil service as a whole are the Civil Service Commission (see Appendix C), the Central Inspection Commission (see Appendix D), and the Bureau of Accounts (BOA).

The Civil Service Commission oversees the recruitment, training, promotion, and transfer of all personnel in ministries and public agencies and enterprises. It manages the National Institute for Public Administration and Development (NIPAD), which runs training programs for civil servants.

The Central Inspection Commission's main function is to uncover and punish corruption, mismanagement, and failures to comply with existing rules and standards within the bureaucracy and the military. The CIC also develops recommendations for improvements in bureaucratic performance.

The Bureau of Accounts conducts internal audits of all government ministries and public agencies, approves public contracts and other financial commitments of the state, and ensures that all payments follow existing procedures and standards.

2. Control Agencies and State Capacity

Four factors suggest that upgrading the capacities of the executive control agencies constitutes the best way to improve the performance of the executive branch as a whole.

- Control agencies can have a direct and important impact on the *entire* bureaucracy.
- Their strengthening appears to be the most direct and effective way to weaken the nepotism and corruption that severely constrain the effectiveness of the executive branch and undermine its public image.
- The senior management of these agencies is highly capable, honest, and well disposed toward administrative reform.
- Prime Minister Hariri himself has expressed the desire to use control agencies as a means of promoting administrative reform. AID action in this area, therefore, would be entirely consistent with the wishes of the Lebanese government.

3. What Can be done to Strengthen the Executive Control Agencies?

U.S. assistance to these agencies should focus on training and equipment. Specific types and levels of assistance should be determined by assessments following prior consultations with GOL officials and with other donors.

C. Initiatives for the Parliament

The project paper calls for enhancing the institutional capacities of parliament. Participants expressed their belief that while political constraints that limit the effectiveness of Parliament will not be entirely removed even if administrative capacities are upgraded, nevertheless technical assistance can enhance the long-term ability of the Parliament to develop into an effective arena for policy making and oversight over other branches of government. However, the workshop generated less information on this institution than it did on the central control agencies. Thus it was felt by participants that a more detailed assessment would be useful for determining precisely those functions and structures of Parliament that would contribute most, were they strengthened, to enhancing overall institutional capacity.

A few points regarding parliamentary structure and the responsibilities of the units described in Appendix E are noted below.

The parliamentary staff, which currently includes about 400 employees, has always been recruited mostly through the Speaker, and is accountable to him. The General Secretariat is essentially the preserve of the Speaker, and the Secretary General can be described as the Speaker's Chief of Staff. A legal advisor is available to both the Speaker and MPs.

The Minutes Unit is responsible for recording decrees and all utterances of deputies during parliamentary sessions. It employs about 20 individuals. The Speaker has the right to make any deletions he wishes to the official minutes, which can be made available to the public within a few weeks.

The Committees Unit comprises approximately 14 parliamentary committees, the most influential of which are Foreign Relations, Defense, Health, Administration and Justice, and Public Works. Unfortunately, the total staff of these committees is limited to about twenty individuals, who are not specialized by committee subjects, and have very limited skills. Their main responsibilities include taking notes during committee meetings, preparing agendas, and responding to information requests regarding documents, existing laws, etc.

The Protocol Unit is responsible for activities such as meetings between MPs and foreign dignitaries.

The exact functions of the Parliamentary Affairs Unit are not clear, but include organizing visits of MPs to foreign countries.

The Administration and Finance Unit oversees financial activities within the parliament. It is the one parliamentary unit that is the most susceptible to corruption because it handles all payments. With a staff of approximately 70 to 80 employees, it is also the Parliament's largest unit. Speaker Berri recently proposed that the Bureau of Accounts (BOA) extend its monitoring function over the Parliament, in which case the Administration and Finance Unit would come under the purview of BOA.

The Press and Public Relations Unit issues press credentials and provides information on Parliament to interested parties.

The Research Unit is no longer operational. In 1984, one of the participants in the workshop, Maroun Kisirwani, participated in an effort to revive the Research Unit. The project had been initiated by the Speaker of the Parliament at the time, Hussain Al-Hussaini. The extreme political turmoil and polarization that prevailed in the mid-1980s undermined this undertaking. The very fact that it was attempted, however, suggests that leaders of the Lebanese Parliament are aware of the need to develop information and analysis support structures.

The workshop concluded that intervention should concentrate on providing the technical assistance that can enhance Parliament's administrative capacity, hence its long term ability to perform a variety of functions normally discharged by legislative bodies. Five types of intervention were deemed to be relevant to attaining this goal:

- Strengthening the Research Unit
- Strengthening the Administration and Finance Unit
- Strengthening the Committees Unit
- Strengthening the Minutes Unit
- Providing Parliament with a voting machine

1. Strengthening the Research Unit

In a British-like parliamentary system, MPs can rely on the party machines to provide them with the information they need to make informed decisions on matter of public policy. In Lebanon, as was shown earlier, the situation is entirely different. The absence of structured, cohesive political parties and the personalistic nature of alliances and blocs translate into a lack of informational and support structures. MPs are condemned to operate with very few back-up services. Expertise, research capabilities, and equipment are lacking. This situation prevents the Parliament from being an effective policy-making body and puts it at a disadvantage relative to the Council of Ministers, which has access to information through the various ministries.

Such a context suggests that revitalizing the parliament's research unit is a logical area of intervention. It would greatly improve the quality of the information and analysis available to the parliamentary committees. Concrete steps toward strengthening the research unit might include providing it with appropriate equipment and information systems, and upgrading existing staff skills. This type of assistance is unlikely to generate opposition. It would provide resources which would enable Parliament to play a more effective role in its relations with other branches of government.

2. Strengthening the Administration and Finance Unit

This agency could use a financial management system to better enable it to fulfill its monitoring role. At present the weakness of the Administration and Finance Unit invites

abuse. The Speaker himself has demonstrated interest in upgrading Parliament's capacity to monitor financial affairs. Because of the comparatively rudimentary procedures currently used, a significant enhancement in the performance of this unit could be attained comparatively quickly and with relatively few resources.

3. Strengthening the Committees Unit

An increasing amount of Parliament's work is done in committee, yet the administrative support at that level is very weak. Appropriate assistance would speed the flow of business within committees, result in more efficient procedures for bill drafting and amendment, and facilitate greater budgetary and financial oversight.

4. Strengthening the Minutes Unit

The Minutes Unit still takes minutes by hand. More rapid production of minutes, which now requires several weeks, would both facilitate the legislative process and enhance Parliament's external image. It would also result in a more accurate public record.

5. Providing Parliament with a Voting Machine

This is an intervention that was specifically requested by the Deputy Speaker at the Cyprus conference held in January 1993. A voting machine is highly visible and can significantly expedite the flow of parliamentary business. A voting machine is likely to have various effects on parliamentary decision making procedures. Potential effects should be reviewed with relevant individuals as part of an assessment.

D. Conclusions

Workshop participants concluded that the three control agencies of the executive bureaucracy and Parliament are appropriate targets for the provision of training, technical assistance and commodities. They also concluded that appropriate selections of interventions could only be made in close consultation with appropriate GOL officials and with other donors, and not before up to date assessments had been completed of the various agencies.

Appendix A

WORKSHOP ON LEBANON

17-18 June 1993

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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William Jansen, NE/DR/HR
Frederick Machner, AID/NE/ME
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Bert Porter, AID/NE/ME/LI
John Slattery, AID/NE/DP
James Walker, AID/NE
Marcus Winter, AID/NE/DR

DIS Contractor Staff

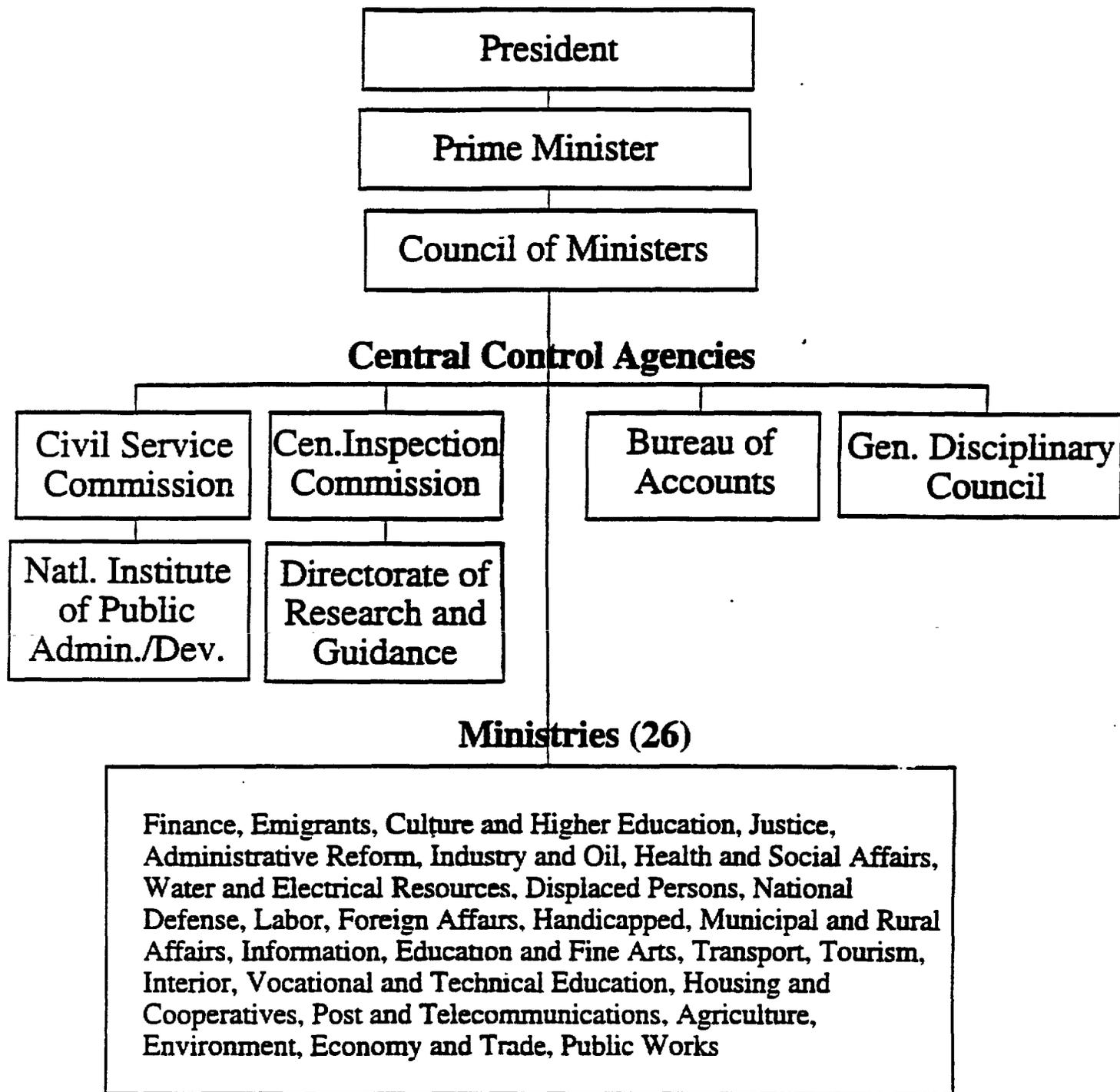
Elizabeth Bassan, Project Supervisor
Leo Pastore, Deputy Coordinator
Alan Richards, Technical Coordinator
Robert Springborg, Political Institutions Specialist

Observer

Michael Hudson, Georgetown University

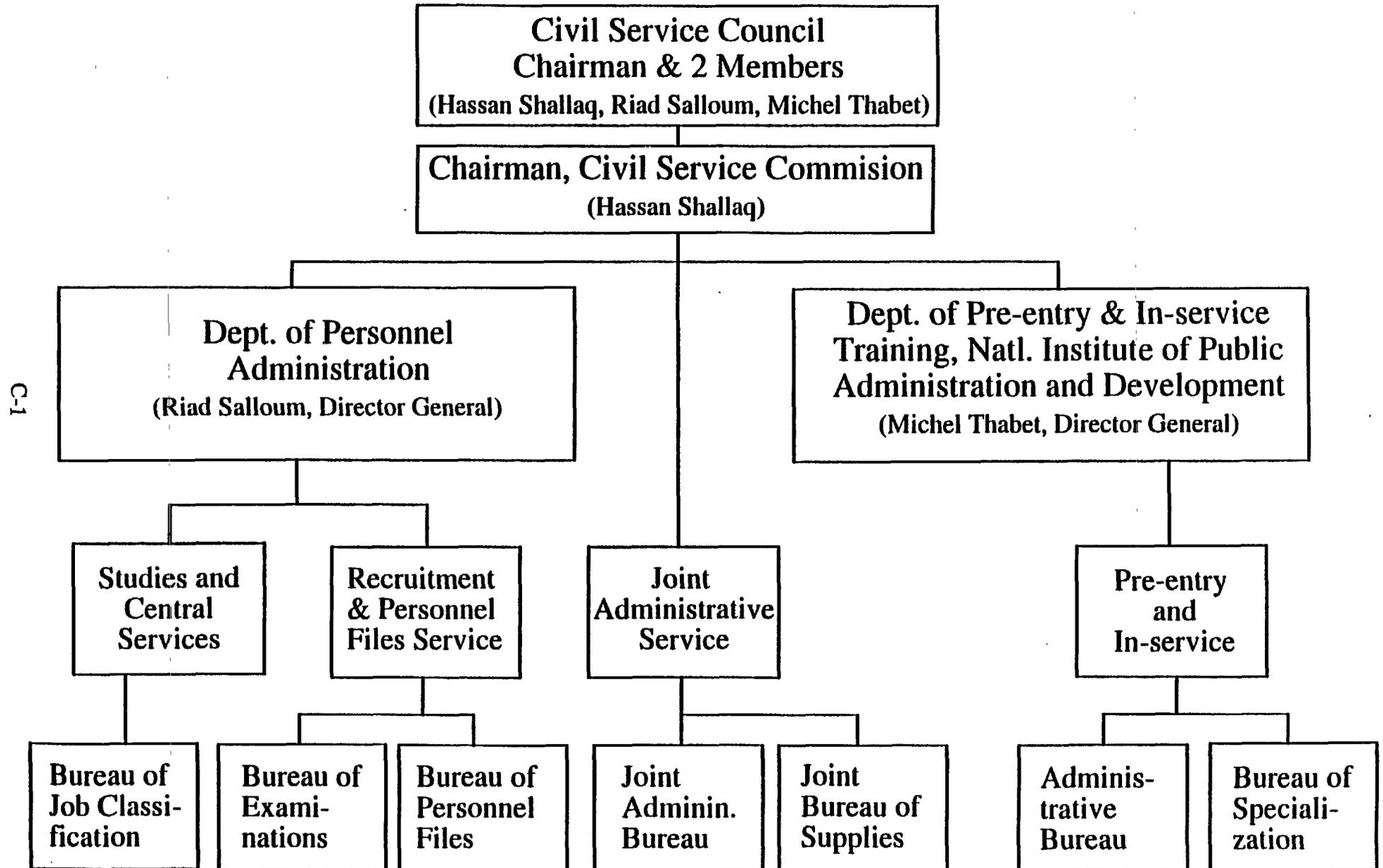
Appendix B

Executive Bureaucracy and Central Control Agencies



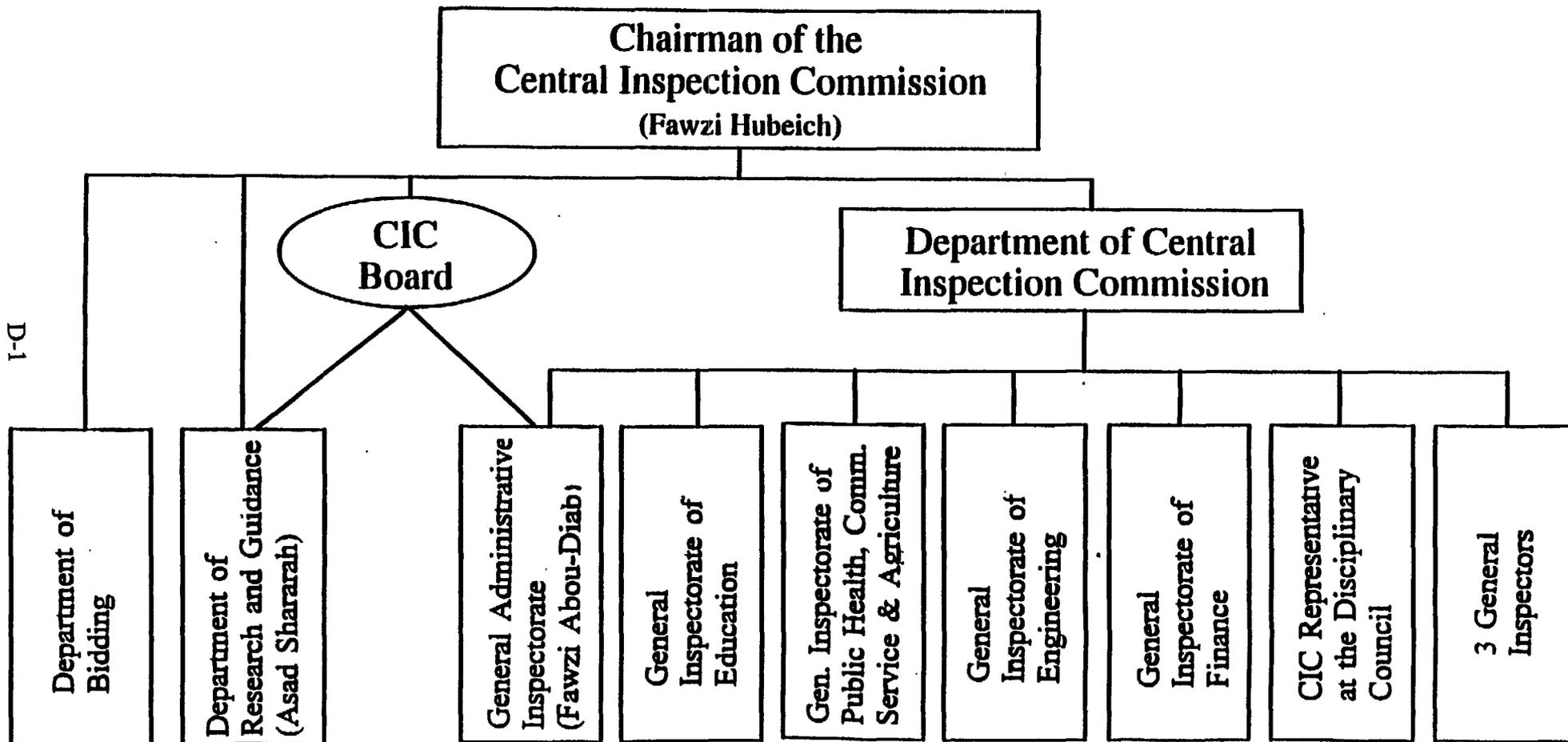
Appendix C

Organization of the Civil Service Commission



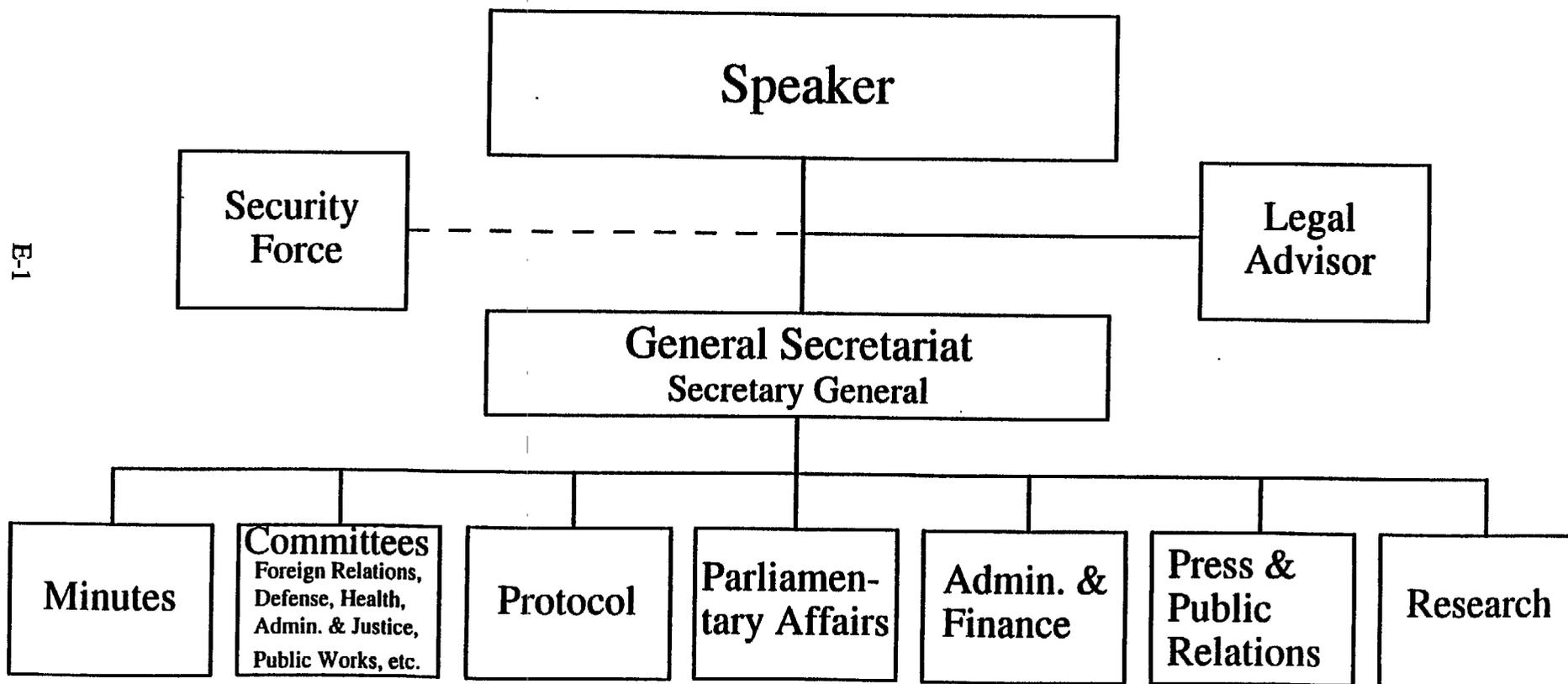
Appendix D

Organization of the Central Inspection Commission



Appendix E

General Organization of Parliamentary Units



E-1