

heightened sectarian consciousness. This contributed to the polarization of Lebanese society, once again hindering efforts to resolve the conflict.

Faris summarized the discussion by noting that in terms of Lebanon's internal problems, there have been three general approaches to conflict resolution. One approach favours preservation of the status quo (i.e., law and order), whereas a second course views deconfessionalization of the system as a prerequisite to law and order. A third approach, which recognizes that security and reform are inseparably linked, accepts limited reform within the context of the sectarian system, but looks to redefine power sharing among Christians and Muslims.

Major Settlement Attempts Before Ta'if

1975 -- 1976

This period saw two major settlement attempts: the National Dialogue Committee and the Frangieh Constitutional Document. The National Dialogue Committee, formed at the initiative of Syria following an extremely destructive round of fighting in 1975-76, was composed of some prominent figures in the Lebanese establishment and political arenas, as well as militia leaders and a few professionals. The committee faced the problem of having no clearly defined agenda and members who held completely different expectations. According to Faris, veteran Maronite politicians (Camille Chamoun, Pierre Gemayel, and Raymond Eddé) demanded that the committee restore law and order and postpone any real discussion of reforms, all the while denying that a change was required in Lebanon's constitutional arrangements. Kamal Joumlatt, who represented the Lebanese National Movement (LNM), a broad coalition of Muslim and Christian Lebanese, called for the complete deconfessionalization of the political system, and was convinced that conflict settlement depended on prior internal reform.

The "Maronite" group believed that any negotiations with the LNM to alter the political system would not be in its favour unless it was able to end the armed presence of the PLO in Lebanon. Members of the LNM, on the other hand, wanted to exact