

of a new constitution instituting equal rights, a one-man one-vote electoral system, the elimination of existing communal privileges, the restructuring of the army, and the disarming of the militias. This plan was rejected by some Maronite factions, but talks between all the main parties to the conflict were initiated in early November.

On 28 December leaders of the Lebanese Forces, the PSP and Amal signed an accord in Damascus. The agreement included major political reforms and reiterated the position that Lebanon had an Arab character and a special relationship with Syria. Within days of the signing of the agreement, however, fighting had broken out within the Maronite community between factions favouring and factions opposing the accord. The leader of the Lebanese Forces was defeated and, with his departure from Lebanon, the prospects for national reconciliation decreased once again.

At the end of March 1986 the last contingent of French troops was withdrawn from the country. On 19 April, the Soviet Union for the first time voted in favour of renewing the mandate of the UN Interim force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). This force had been established in 1978 to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restore peace and security, and assist the Government of Lebanon in re-establishing its authority in southern Lebanon.

In Canada, the report of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, released in June 1985, contained some observations on Canadian-Lebanese relations. It noted that the previous Government had opposed the 1982 Israeli invasion of the country and had called for a withdrawal of all foreign troops from Lebanon. The Committee suggested that "a continued Syrian presence might, in fact, assist temporarily in maintaining internal security in Lebanon. In some respects Syria may be the only power left in Lebanon capable of restoring some order and unity to the country." Finally, the Committee expressed its support for "any efforts the Canadian Government is able to