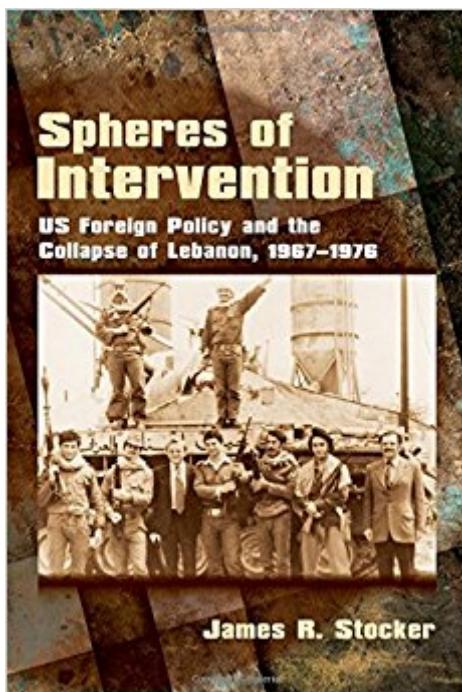


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Spheres Of Intervention: US Foreign Policy And The Collapse Of Lebanon, 1967–1976



Synopsis

In *Spheres of Intervention*, James R. Stocker examines the history of diplomatic relations between the United States and Lebanon during a transformational period for Lebanon and a time of dynamic changes in US policy toward the Middle East. Drawing on tens of thousands of pages of declassified materials from US archives and a variety of Arabic and other non-English sources, Stocker provides a new interpretation of Lebanon's slide into civil war, as well as insight into the strategy behind US diplomatic initiatives toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. During this period, Stocker argues, Lebanon was often a pawn in the games of larger powers. The stability of Lebanon was an aim of US policy at a time when Israel's borders with Egypt and Jordan were in active contention. Following the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the internal political situation in Lebanon became increasingly unstable due to the regional military and political stalemate, the radicalization of the country's domestic politics, and the appearance of Palestinian militias on Lebanese territory. US officials were more deeply involved in Lebanese affairs than most outside the region realized. After a series of internal crises in 1969, 1970, and 1973, civil war broke out in Lebanon in 1975. The conflict reached a temporary halt after a Syrian military intervention the following year, but this was only an end to the first stage of what would be a sixteen-year civil war. During these crises, the US sought to help the Lebanese government in a variety of ways, including providing military aid to the Lebanese military, convincing Arab countries to take measures to help the Lebanese government, mediating Lebanon's relations with Israel, and even supporting certain militias.

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"As we survey the current turmoil in the Middle East, we are all the more in need of careful, dispassionate, and insightful historical scholarship on US interactions with that region, and particularly with the small but pivotal nation of Lebanon. James R. Stocker gives us that, and more. *Spheres of Intervention* is a richly researched, perceptive, and skillfully crafted book about a diplomatic relationship that has powerfully shaped Middle Eastern politics down to our own day. Resourcefully mining recently declassified US government documents, and incorporating Arabic- and French-language sources seldom found in Anglophone accounts, Stocker provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date treatment we have of official US involvement in the Lebanese civil war of 1975–1976." • Salim Yaqub, University of California, Santa Barbara, author of *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* "Spheres of Intervention is a necessary and very valuable contribution to our knowledge about Lebanon's recent history, Lebanese-American relations, and US Mideast foreign policy. This book is a must-read for those with a special interest in Lebanon and for historians of US policy in the Middle East. In the first book to take extensive advantage of the declassified US diplomatic cables of the period, James R. Stocker fills an important gap in our understanding of Lebanon's foreign relations during the decade and a half leading to its collapse in 1975." • Paul Salem, Vice President for Policy, Middle East Institute, author of *Bitter Legacy: Ideology and Politics in the Arab World* "Before the collapse of the state in Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Yemen there was Lebanon's descent into prolonged and costly civil war. James R. Stocker has meticulously examined the record of US involvement in Lebanon's drift toward war in the years 1967–1976. He rightly concludes that Lebanon per se was rarely central in the thinking of American policymakers, especially Henry Kissinger. But what the United States did or did not do in the surrounding region had important spillover effects in Lebanon. The unwillingness of the United States to tackle the Palestinian issue, which was of key importance to the Lebanese, meant that it was very hard to stabilize Lebanon once the civil war began in earnest in 1975. This is a sobering account of the destruction of a country on the margins of American grand strategy. Today's crises in the Middle East have far too many resemblances to the story told so authoritatively in these pages." • William B. Quandt, author of *Peace Process*

James R. Stocker is Assistant Professor of International Affairs at Trinity Washington University.

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