

**Comments on the file of John Gunther Dean's
contacts with former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri
1993-2005**

When JG Dean was US Ambassador to Lebanon (1978-1981) Rafic Hariri was not yet on the Lebanese political scene. Nonetheless, Rafic Hariri was known in certain circles. Mr. Hariri had started his career with the Audi Bank in Saida; He was appreciated by his Greek-catholic employers. The latter were friends of Mrs. Dean's father, who was the leading French banker in Lebanon at the time.

While JG Dean was US ambassador to Lebanon, he was of considerable assistance to the Saudi ambassador to Lebanon, Lt. General Ali Shaher, who had been shot down in his helicopter returning from Tripoli to Beirut. (See JG Dean's Oral History recorded by the Association for diplomatic studies and training in Arlington, Virginia) At the time Mr. Hariri was very active professionally and privately in Saudi Arabia. There is little doubt that JG Dean's even-handed approach to the civil war in Lebanon and his intervention on behalf of the Saudi Ambassador was appreciated by the Saudis. (JG Dean was asked to telephone from Beirut to Saudi Crown Prince Fahd to alert him to Ambassador Shaher's fate and to urge the Crown Prince to telephone the President of Syria and Mr. Arafat to end a violent confrontation in front of the American Hospital in Beirut which risked to ignite a major war between the left and the right in Beirut.)

When Mr. Hariri became Prime Minister of Lebanon, he asked JG Dean to come to Beirut to meet with him. The ticket was provided by Middle East Airlines. The meeting took place on February 16 and 17, 1993 in Beirut and was reported to Assistant Secretary Edward Djerejian. (see this file). Two months later JGD wrote Prime Minister Hariri suggesting he speak before the UN General Assembly in September 1993. (see this file)

From 1993 onward, JG Dean met sporadically in Paris or in Beirut with Mr. Hariri. JG Dean also met with Mr. Hariri's representatives in Washington where Mr. Hariri maintained two separate offices on 19th Street Northwest. Conversation turned around the work of the Hariri educational foundation and reconstruction of war-torn Lebanon.

Contact with Mr. Hariri was maintained until his untimely death in February 2005. For as long as Rafic Hariri was on the Lebanese political scene, JG Dean defended him vigorously as the most effective and most tolerant Lebanese leaders to restore Lebanon to its place in the Near East. Not even Lebanese appreciated this line. Some Lebanese criticized Hariri for not having an enlightened social policy for Lebanon's poor.

After Mr. Hariri's assassination, JG Dean called on the widow and his son, Saad Hariri, in Paris to express his condolences. The very supportive paragraph JG Dean wrote in the book of condolences was reprinted in some Beirut newspapers.

The other articles and clippings in this file give the reader a more complete picture of Mr. Hariri's career. They leave, however, unanswered the question of who killed Hariri.

There is little doubt that the late Prime Minister and most other Lebanese politicians, had approved JG Dean's tolerant attitude and help to 18 different confessional groups in Lebanon. I would also like to believe that most Lebanese leaders shared J G Dean's conclusion that "Lebanon faced 2 tigers: one north of the border and the one south of the border. Both have their own agenda." This evaluation has not changed during the last 50 years of JG Dean's links with Lebanon.

Listing of items in this file:

1. February 18, 1993: Letter from Amb. Dean to Assistant Secretary Djerejian re: JGD's meetings in Lebanon February 16 and 17, 1993 (4 pages)
2. February 24, 1993: Article Le Monde entitled: "Le Liban donne son accord de principe pour la reprise des négociations de paix. (1 page)
3. April 21, 1993 : Letter from JG Dean to Prime Minister Hariri (3 pages)
4. June 3, 1993: Handwritten note by JG Dean re meeting in Paris with Prime Minister Hariri (1 page)
5. August 5, 1993: Letter from JG Dean to Lebanese Ambassador in Paris, Johnny Abdo. (1 page)
6. March 16 and 17, 2005: Exchange of e-mail between JGD and Ray Close re Lebanon (3 pages)
7. February 15, 2005: Washington Post article entitled: "Blast kills Ex-Premier in Lebanon" (4 pages)
8. February 17, 2005: Washington Post article entitled: "With a rare display of unity, Lebanese bury former Premier." (2 pages)
9. April 2005: The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs: "The Hariri Assassination". (7 pages)