

## Pentagon: Lebanese Army Gets M-60A3 Tanks

Contributed by Administrator  
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The U.S. is trying to help Lebanon bolster its military strength while considering the concerns of Israel and its qualitative military edge, a senior Pentagon official said.

"We're not trying to build up some juggernaut that could be threatening to anyone in the region, but to make the Lebanese armed forces capable in their own country," said Chris Straub, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Near East and South Asian affairs.

"We don't have a conversation on these matters without considering the concerns of Israel and Israel's qualitative military edge," Straub said in an interview.

"That's a U.S. commitment that we take very seriously. For example, the Lebanese army M-60 tanks are no match for Israel's Merkava 4 main battle tanks."

Straub said the Lebanese Armed Forces has "a unique role." "It's one of the strongest national institutions in Lebanon. All Lebanese look up to it as a symbol of their state."

That is an important fact, given the recent history of the country -- the civil war from 1975 to 1990.

The United States and Lebanon signed a military cooperation agreement in October, establishing the U.S.-Lebanese Joint Military Commission to provide an official framework for the bilateral U.S.-Lebanese military relationship.

The U.S. and Lebanese militaries have worked together since 2006. The joint commission will provide a yearly opportunity for both sides to examine military cooperation and the goals for the coming year, Straub said, and much needs to be done.

"The Lebanese military was weakened not only by the civil war, but by the Syrian occupation," Straub said. Twice since Syrian troops left Lebanon in 2005, he added, U.S. Central Command officials have surveyed the Lebanese military and presented findings and recommendations.

"The most important one was that the Lebanese military needed a lot of help in the military basics, which are not always the most glamorous," Straub, a retired Army officer, said. "They needed trucks, Humvees, parts and ammunition more than they needed high-end, expensive weaponry."

They also need training, he added. The 72,000-member Lebanese military needs basic help with training in marksmanship, urban combat, logistics and maintenance, and staff functions. Lebanese officers are attending several U.S. military colleges, and the International Military Education and Training fund for Lebanon has grown from \$1.4 million in fiscal 2008 to \$2.1 million this year.

In 2006, the United States renewed its security relationship with Lebanon, and since then has funneled more than \$400 million in foreign military sales money.

"It is national policy that Lebanon be sovereign, that Lebanon be independent," Straub said. "Our part of that is to help build up the Lebanese armed forces so the Lebanese government can be sovereign in all its territory."

"The U.S. goal is (for the army and police) working for the democratically elected Lebanese government to exercise power throughout the country," Straub said. "That's not going to happen tomorrow, or perhaps next year," he added. "But that is our goal."

The United States has sent 285 Humvees to Lebanon, and another 312 will arrive by March. The United States has sent 200 trucks to the Lebanese and 41 M-198 155 mm artillery pieces. The Lebanese army also will get night-vision equipment and some tactical unmanned aerial vehicles.

"Behind it is all basics &ndash; 12 million rounds of ammo, spare helicopter parts, shoulder-fired rockets," Straub said. "We want them to play their role in controlling Lebanese territory. We also want them to deter the terrorist threat."

The United States is committed to getting Lebanon more modern tanks, and the U.S. military is working on delivering M-60A3 tanks.

"Lebanese take care of their equipment," Straub noted, "because it has been hard to come by for them." He also said the Lebanese record on safeguarding American equipment "is impeccable."

"We think we are helping make the region more peaceful &ndash; at least more possibility for peace in the region &ndash; by giving the Lebanese government the ability to control the events in its territory &ndash; whether it be terrorism or militias," Straub said. "Either way, we think this is good for everybody's security in the region, or we wouldn't be doing it."

The way forward will take time, however, Straub said. In fighting against terror groups holed up in a refugee camp, for example, the Lebanese military rigged a Huey helicopter to drop bombs.

"It's important to do this at the level the Lebanese military can absorb," he said. "The next step is more capability for the air, thinking in terms of not only being able to transport things via air, but have a precise close-air support (capability)."

U.S. military cooperation with the Lebanese also sends a political message, Straub said. "The United States cares about Lebanon's independence and sovereignty," he said. "The people know that and appreciate it."

<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&9AD9A82F178B3604C225751300268210>

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M-60 Patton Tank  
{youtube}5ep5jM9P7lg{/youtube}

M60A3 Series M60A3 main battle tank moves along a street in Germany during Exercise REFORGER '85.

In 1978, work began on the M60A3 variant. It featured a number of technological enhancements, including smoke dischargers, a new rangefinder and ballistic computer, and a turret stabilization system. All active American M60s eventually underwent the conversion to the A3 model.

The M60A3 was phased out of US service in the early 1990s, but it remained a front-line MBT into the 21st century for a number of other countries.

While overall a less effective tank than the M1 Abrams, the M60A3 did have some advantages over M1 models:

- The M60A3 had a notably better thermal imaging system than that of M1 up into the 21st century, until many M1s had newer ones installed. It was, however considerably noisier, emitting a loud clicking sound audible several meters outside the vehicle.
- The M60A3 had an exterior phone for infantry to talk directly to the crew inside. This feature was also installed on some USMC M1A1s in Iraq and is now being incorporated into all active Abrams.
- The diesel had lower performance, but also had lower cost, maintenance and better fuel efficiency.
- The exhaust temperature of an M1's turbine is very high, which makes it dangerous for infantry to take cover behind it, rather than the diesel engine on an M60A3.
- The escape hatch located under the hull of the M60A3 is not present in the M1 Abrams, making it more difficult for the crew to bail out of a battle-damaged Abrams than a M60A3.
- The M60 series' L68A1 105mm main gun fires a much wider variety of ammunition than the currently used 120 mm smoothbore on the M1 series, including a dedicated HE (High Explosive) round, a flechette round (commonly known as 'beehive') and a White Phosphorus smoke round, among others.
- The M60 series includes instrumentation enabling indirect fire as ad-hoc artillery if needed.

- M60A3 - M60A1 fitted with a laser rangefinder, solid state ballistic computer, and a crosswind sensor.

M60A3TypeMain battle tankPlace of originUnited StatesService historyIn service1960 - early 1990s (USA)WarsYom Kippur,Iran-Iraq, Operation Desert Storm, Iraq, Western Sahara WarProduction historyManufacturerDetroit Arsenal Tank Plant, ChryslerVariantsMany, see the variants sectionSpecificationsWeightM60: 50.7 tons (46 tonnes) M60A1 52 to 54 tons depending on turret design.LengthM60: 22.79' (6.94 m)WidthM60: 11.92' (3.6 m)HeightM60: 10.54' (3.2 m)Crew4Armor150 mm (6.12")Primary armament105 mm (4.1") M68 gun (M60/A1/A3)

152mm (6 in) M162 Gun/Launcher (M60A2)Secondary

armament.50 (12.7 mm) M85

7.62 mm machine gunEngineContinental AVDS-1790-2 V12 air cooled, twin turbocharged diesel

750 hpPower/weight14.5 hp/tonSuspensionTorsion barsGround clearance15.3" (389 mm)Operational

range300 miles (480 km)Speed30 mph (48 km/h)