

Speech summary by JGD :

On September 25, former U.S. Ambassador John Gunther Dean officially launched the American Library in Paris's Diplomatic History Collection with a speech on Lebanon to a crowd of over 120, including a dozen former and serving foreign ambassadors. France-Amériques hosted the event in partnership with ALP.

Dean served as Ambassador to Lebanon for three years, under both Carter and Reagan. He emphasized that during that time his prime directive from both administrations was to "defend the territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon and to support the central government". Dean carried out these instructions, even putting his life on the line when traveling throughout the country, ignoring threats from foreign governments to stay away from certain areas, and engaging in personal contact with every religious group and even with rebellious militias. His even-handedness was much appreciated by all the factions in the country at that time.

Ambassador Dean was also authorized by both Presidents to work with the Palestinians in Lebanon, which led to the request for their help in obtaining the release of the first 13 American hostages from Iran in 1979. It is Dean's strong conviction that the key to resolving the instability in the Middle East is the resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict ; he suggested that a useful step would be a return to the peace initiative ratified by the Arab League Summit in 2002, which recognized Israel in its 1967 borders.

The text of Ambassador Dean's speech is available at the Library.