Historical-Political Background to “The Kite”

Background:

The region along the Lebanese-Israeli border (where the movie takes place) is hotly contested and subject to sudden shifts, both figuratively and literally. Partly, border tensions are a reflection of a broader conflict between the Lebanese and Israeli governments; partly, they have arisen from issues specific to the border area.

Lebanon’s relationship with Israel has been a rocky one since the foundation of the modern state of Israel in 1948. Although Lebanon has not participated in the Arab wars against Israel, neither are the two states on friendly terms. A traveler cannot even visit Lebanon with an Israeli stamp in his/her passport. The challenges of the broader Palestinian-Israeli conflict have further poisoned relations between Israel and Lebanon. A central issue is the more than 400,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, a group too numerous and culturally specific to be absorbed into the mainstream population and who, therefore, live on the margins of Lebanese society. Palestinian cross-border attacks and the Israeli invasions of Lebanon in 1978, 1982, and 2006 have further strained relations between the countries and had devastating effects on Lebanon’s political and economic stability. Syria – and to a lesser extent, Iran – have supported policies that exacerbate this tension.

Border disagreements further color relations between Israel and Lebanon. In 2000, Israel withdrew from Lebanese territory to the Blue Line in accordance with a U.N. Security Council resolution from 1978. However, a few small villages are still disputed. In addition, the border disagreement reflects a conflict over water rights (the Hasbani and Wazzani rivers and the Chebaa aquifer).

In many respects, the Lebanese-Israeli border is a focal point for issues which divide countries in the region. As in most border regions of the world, the physical boundary is an arbitrary construction, separating populations and even families. These ambiguities are explored in the film “The Kite.”

A few accessible (short, clear, online) resources:

About the Druze of Israel:
Two Perspectives/Same Source – Lebanese-Israeli Relations:


Timelines: