MEMORANDUM FOR: [ ]

Executive Secretary

THROUGH: NFAC Action Officer

FROM: Helene L. Boatner
             Director, Near East/South Asia Analysis

Attached is our memo titled "Lebanese Presidential Election" which was prepared by [ ] of our Arab-Israel Division in response to the request from Allen Lenz of the National Security Council.

Helene L. Boatner

Date 11 December 1981

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

11 December 1981

MEMORANDUM

LEBANESE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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Summary

The emerging Lebanese presidential campaign, aimed at the election scheduled for next summer, is already boiling down to a contest between the Christian Lebanese Front, led by Bashir Jumayyil, and the Syrians. The Front does not have sufficient support in the Lebanese parliament to elect its own candidate, but it could probably muster the votes to block a Syrian-backed candidate from achieving the broad majority Damascus will be seeking.

Raymond Edde and former President Sulayman Franjiyah are the two most frequently mentioned possible candidates, although most factions have refused to tip their hand so early in the campaign. Edde is popular in Lebanon and has ties with the Muslim community, but his relations with Syria have been strained in the past and he is distrusted by hardline Christians. Franjiyah, widely viewed as a Syrian stalking horse, is anathema to the Phalange-dominated Lebanese Front, and his election would almost certainly lead to new Syrian-Phalange hostilities.

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The Legal Framework

The Lebanese constitution stipulates that the President must be elected by two-thirds of the 99 members of Parliament on the first ballot or by a simple majority on subsequent ballots.* Parliamentary elections have not been held since 1972, and seven of the 99 deputies elected that year have since died. It appears that unless the constitution is amended to reflect a voting pool of 92 deputies, a winner would still require 66 votes on the first ballot or 50 thereafter. This could work to the advantage of a small bloc seeking to prevent a candidate's election.

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Holding the election does not require a specific quorum. Only the number of deputies to elect a candidate--66 on the first ballot and 50 thereafter--need be present. President Sarkis was elected in 1976 with the support of 69 of the 71 deputies in attendance; his Muslim and leftist opponents, knowing they lacked the votes to block his election, boycotted the balloting.

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A constitutional amendment was passed in 1976 to allow the election that year to be held three months before the time stipulated by the constitution, largely because the Syrians hoped the prompt replacement of then President Sulayman Franjiyah would end the civil war. Many deputies were cowed into backing Elias Sarkis, who had both Syrian and hardline Christian support against Raymond Edde. Leftist leader Kamal Junblat, who supported Edde, tried several times to postpone the election. He finally resorted to ordering his militiamen to stoke up the fighting and detain deputies in an unsuccessful effort to prevent a quorum of 66 from meeting to elect Sarkis.

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The 1982 Election

Because of the unsettled security situation and the continuing Syrian role in Lebanon, the impending election is likely to resemble the campaign of 1976. If the Syrians--through their Lebanese Muslim and a few Christian allies--decide to press for the election of a strongly pro-Syrian candidate, they are likely to be opposed actively only by deputies representing the Christian Lebanese Front and a few allied with it.

The Front could attempt to block the election by preventing a sufficient number of pro-Syrian deputies from assembling in the hope that this would force Syria to accept a compromise candidate or lead to a crisis that would prompt outside intervention on the Front's behalf.

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*Under the unwritten National Covenant of 1943, the President must be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of Parliament a Shia Muslim.

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-- Such a strategy would almost certainly require kidnapings, killings, and other forms of intimidation and violence.

-- If the election were not held and President Sarkis's term expired in September 1982, a so-called "constitutional vacuum" would be created and the cabinet would have to assume executive responsibilities until an election could be held.

-- Many Lebanese politicians and observers fear that such a development could be fatal to the presidency as the symbol of Lebanese unity.

Alternatively, the Front could allow the election to take place and try to block the Syrian candidate on the first ballot.

-- The Syrians would prefer to win on the first ballot with a two-thirds majority because they could then claim that the new President represented all but the most hardline Christian elements.

-- Damascus took this tack in 1976 when it lined up backing for Sarkis from deputies representing all confessional groups and regions.   25X1

We believe Jumayyil could count on enough deputies (27) to block a Syrian candidate on the first ballot, but he probably could not prevent a Syrian victory on a subsequent ballot if Damascus settled for a President elected by less than a two-thirds majority.   25X1

At this point Syria's strategy is unclear. The Syrians are opposed to the election of a hardline Christian, but we have little information on whether they plan to back a strongly pro-Syrian nominee or are looking for a compromise candidate. There are signs that they believe they cannot marshal enough votes to win on the first ballot. If this is the case, they may choose to promote a strongly pro-Syrian candidate in the early stages of the campaign with an eye toward "compromising" on a candidate who still meets most of their requirements and can be elected on the first ballot.   25X1

On the other hand, indications that the Syrians believe they cannot muster the votes to win on the first ballot may simply be tactical maneuverings designed to frighten their potential allies in Lebanon into a political coalition against the Lebanese Front. Combined with warnings about Phalangist machinations these tactics might also help keep pressure on potentially wayward deputies in the event of a first ballot setback. Damascus already appears to be trying to build a coalition   25X1
consisting of Franjiyah, former Prime Minister Rashid Karami, and the leftist National Movement to serve as the vehicle for confronting Jumayyil's Lebanese Front over the election.

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Raymond Edde

When asked recently about the strong public support in a poll last year for the possible candidacy of Raymond Edde, former Prime Minister and leading Sunni politician Saeb Salam said, "I think if you conduct the same poll again now, you will find the result still stands, but that is the opinion of the public and it is not the public that elects the President in Lebanon." Although blunt, his statement highlights the relatively limited role public opinion plays in Lebanon's presidential elections. Previous Presidents have usually been elected largely as a result of political deals among the country's political parties, clans, and confessional groups. Moreover, the traditionally weak electoral link between parliament and the voting public has grown even more tenuous with the postponement of quadrennial elections since 1972. The civil war has caused such major shifts in some constituencies that several deputies could not possibly be reelected in the districts they currently represent. 25X1

Raymond Edde, whose moderate Maronite Nation Bloc has three seats in parliament, apparently retains the backing of at least some of the leaders of the factions that backed him as the candidate of moderate Christians and the Muslim left during the campaign of 1976. Druze chieftain and Muslim leftist National Movement leader Walid Junblat has already endorsed Edde, as has Saeb Salam. Nabih Barri, head of the largest faction of the Shia Amal Movement, has offered cautious support. 25X1

Edde has been unpopular with the Syrians, whom he criticized heavily for their role in the civil war 1975-76 in. There are, however, signs that Edde and the Syrians have recently exchanged political feelers. 25X1

Edde and his National Bloc were at one time allied with Camille Shamun and Pierre Jumayyil, whose factions now constitute the bulk of the Lebanese Front. He broke with them during the parliamentary election in 1972 when, with his eye on the presidency in 1976, he began moving toward the political center. This, combined with hardline Maronite suspicions that he was too sympathetic to the Muslim side during the civil war, earned him the enmity of many hardline Maronites, including Bashir Jumayyil. They remain suspicious that his presidential ambitions will prompt him to concede too much to Damascus. Following the elections in 1976 Edde, who now lives in Paris, was the target of two attempts on his life one of which was believed to have been perpetrated by the Phalange. 25X1

Sulayman Franjiyah

Former President Sulayman Franjiyah has been widely viewed as one of Syria's leading candidates for the presidency since his break with the Lebanese Front in early 1978. Franjiyah has little popularity either with Muslims, who remember his stubborn defense of Maronite supremacy during the civil war, or

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Christians, with whom he has never achieved much of a following outside his fiefdom in northern Lebanon. A dark horse candidate in 1970, he was elected only after the two main candidates dropped out of the race at the last moment, and then only by one vote on the third ballot.   25X6

Although the early years of his   25X6
presidency were marked by a welcome effort to ensure that the parliamentary election in 1972 was conducted fairly, his regime is largely remembered for the country's rapid slide into civil war.   25X1

     If the Syrians decide to take a hard line on the election, Franjiyah could be their candidate. He has already indicated a willingness to establish the kind of close, formal ties Damascus wants from the next President and is strongly motivated by a desire to use the presidency to exact revenge upon the Jumayyils, who he claims were responsible for the murder of his son. If, on the other hand, the Syrians decide on another candidate but are reluctant to tip their hand too soon, they may propose Franjiyah with an eye to abandoning him later as a "conciliatory" gesture aimed at attracting the support of moderate Maronites and
isolating the Phalange.   25X1

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The Lebanese Parliament

Total number of seats	99
Number of living deputies	92
Number of votes needed to win on first ballot	66
Number of votes needed to win on subsequent ballots	50

Likely Lineup

Pro-Syrian	23
Probable Syrian allies	20
Possible Syrian allies	14
Possible Lebanese Front allies	8
Probable Lebanese Front allies	12
Lebanese Front	15

Information on the political leanings of the 92 deputies is in many cases very sketchy, and changes in the above evaluation are likely as more information is obtained.

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The Main Lebanese Political Groups in 1981

Independent Muslims
- **Al Amal**
  Imam Musa al-Sadr missing since September 1978 and,
  Nabih Barri; Shia
- **Islamic Coalition**
  Sa'ib Salam and Rashid Karami; Sunni
- **Islamic Grouping**
  Sahfiq Wazzan; Sunni
- **Democratic Socialist Party**
  Kamal al-Assad; Shia

"National Movement"
(Primarily Muslim Left)
- **Progressive Socialist Party (PSP)**
  Walid Junblat; Druze
- **Independent Nasirite Movement (Murabitun)**
  Ibrahim Qulaylat; Beirut Sunni
- **Communist Action Organization**
  Muhsin Ibrahim; extreme left Shia
- **Communist Party of Lebanon**
  Nicola Shawi and George Hawi; pro-USSR Greek Orthodox Christian
- **Baath Party-Iraqi Wing**
  Abd al-Majid Rafai; Sunni
- **Nasirite Corrective Movement**
  Isamal-Arab; extreme left Sunni
- **Syrian Social Nationalist Party (PPS or SSNP)**
  Inam Raad; left Greek Orthodox Christian
- **Popular Nasserist Organization**
  Mustafa Sa'ad; Sunni
- **Baath Party-Syrian Wing**
  Assam Qansu; Sunni, pro Syrian
- **Arab Socialist Union**
  Abd al-Rahim Murad; Sunni

National Front
(Pro-Syrian Left)
- **Nasirite Organization**
  (Union of Working Peoples Forces) Kamal Shatila; Sunni
- **National Confrontation Front**
  Talal Marhabi and Ali 'Id; Tripoli-based Alawites

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Moderate Christians
- **Independent Parliamentary Bloc**
  Sim'an al-Duwayhi and Butrus Harb; Maronite

Pro-Syrian Christians
- **Zgharta Front**
  Sulayman Franjiyah; Conservative northern Maronite

"Lebanese Front"
(Primarily Christian Right)
- **Phalange Party (Kataib)**
  Pierre Jumayyil and Bashir Jumayyil (Lebanon Front Militia Commander); Maronite and Greek Catholic
- **National Liberal Party**
  Camille Shamun (President of Lebanese Front); Maronite
- **Kaslik Front**
  (Order of Maronite Monks) Bulus Na'man; Maronite Clergy, extreme right
- **Guardians of the Cedars**
  Etienne Saqr AKA Abu Arz; extremist Maronite
- **Al Tanzim**
  George Adnan; extremist Maronite

Independent Christian Right
- **Maronite League**
  Shakir Abu Sulayman; Maronite
- **National Bloc**
  Raymond Edde; Maronite, anti-Syrian
- **Free Lebanon Movement**
  Major Sa'ad Haddad; Maronite/Shia, pro-Israeli

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SUBJECT: Lebanese Presidential Election

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