

**SUBJECT: Lebanese Situation**

25X1

**Distribution:**

- 1 - DDI
- 1 - ADDI
- 1 - NIO/NESA
- 1 - D/NESA
- 1 - DD/NESA
- 1 - C/NESA/AI
- 1 - C/NESA/AI/L
- 1 - NESA/AI/L/ht
- 1 - Chrono

DI/NESA/AI/L [redacted] (26 Sep 88)

25X1

25X1

**Talking Points for the ADDI'S HPSCI Meeting**

25X1

26 September 1988

**Lebanese Situation**

Lebanon's Christians blocked the election of a pro-Syrian candidate, former President Sulayman Franjiyah, at the scheduled meeting of Parliament on 18 August. Since then, they have rejected the Syrian and US supported presidential candidate Mikhail Daher, and blocked two last minute attempts to elect a new President by boycotting Parliament. On September 22, just as his term of office was about to expire, President Gemayel appointed Army Commander Awn head of a transition government charged with electing a new President. The non-Christian members of the Cabinet and Syria claim the previously serving, Muslim-led cabinet of Salim al-Huss is the country's legitimate authority.

Lebanon now has two rival governments, making renewed violence more likely, and reducing prospects of electing a new chief of state.

-- Both sides seem willing to talk for now, but neither is making any concessions. Time is cementing the partition.

**Syria: Key Actor**

Syria is determined to see that the central government in Lebanon is responsive to Damascus' dictates and, specifically, that Lebanon does not become a base for anti-Syrian subversion by Iraq or Israel. The Syrians occupy 65 percent of the country and are well positioned to exercise political influence in Lebanon.

f+ [Redacted]

25X1

[Redacted]

25X1

-- At Syrian urging, Muslim Army brigades and pro-Syrian militias are moving artillery into the Beirut area and are otherwise preparing for a confrontation with the Christians.

**Christian Perceptions**

Lead by Awn and Lebanese Forces (LF) militia chief Samir Ja'Ja, the Christians see themselves as increasingly isolated. Efforts by the LF to find new outside support could expand the problem. Christian hopes of Iraqi and Israeli support--however exaggerated--will stiffen their opposition to Syria.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

25X1  
25X1  
25X1

[redacted]

-- Iraq has been providing financial and military support to the Christians over the past few months. Although we believe arms deliveries have been limited, [redacted] Baghdad is going to deliver about 100 armored vehicles in the near future. [redacted]

25X1  
25X1  
25X1

-- Israel is keeping a low profile and is mostly concerned with the security zone in the south.

**Implications for the US**

If major fighting breaks out, Syrian and pro-Syrian forces will shell the Christian enclave where our Embassy is located. In addition, hardline Christians who view the aborted US-Syrian proposed presidential candidate as a US "sell out" could target our Embassy.

-- The Embassy has reduced personnel strength to about 25 from about 50.

-- Press reports from Beirut note isolated shelling incidents and skirmishes along the border between Muslim and Christian Beirut.

[redacted]

25X1

[redacted]

25X1

**Background Notes:**

[Redacted]

25X1

[Redacted]

25X1

[Redacted]

25X1

**Embassy Transportation:**

- All travel to and from Lebanon for the Embassy is by Helicopter from the British RAF base at Akrotiri, Cyprus.
- The Lebanese Army last week denied us use of the LZ at the Embassy compound, requiring us to use one at a Lebanese Army base. The Lebanese did allow Ambassador McCarthy to use the Embassy LZ on Saturday, however.

[Redacted]

25X1