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Middle East Situation Report #33
(as of 1100 EST, 9 February 1984)

LEBANON/SYRIA




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 the military situation in the capital is quiet. US Naval shelling of targets in the Matn and Shuf areas stopped early this morning. No hostile action has yet been directed against US or other Western personnel in the city. Radical elements, presumably not under the control of Amal leader Nabih Barri, have moved into the Hamra area of the capital near the US Embassy. 

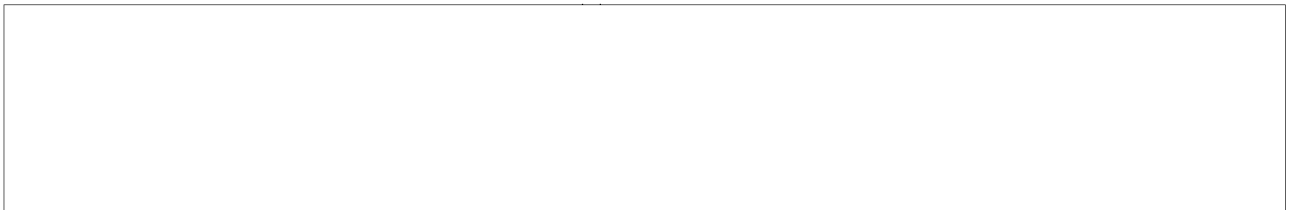
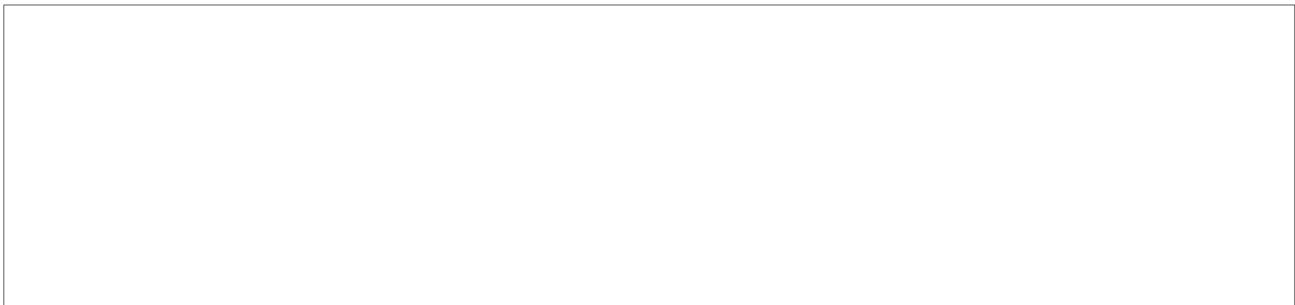
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- Press reports of Muslim militiamen entering bars in West Beirut and destroying liquor supplies suggest that pro-Iranian Shia fundamentalists are active in the city. 

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There are probably a few hundred Palestinians who have returned to West Beirut with the Druze and an equally large number who have been in place for several months. Palestinian strength is not significant in terms of numbers, but could create additional problems for Shia and Druze efforts to establish control of West Beirut. 

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According to our Ambassador in Beirut, Amal leader Barri is taking steps to stabilize the security situation in West Beirut. A security committee made up of Amal and "all Islamic nationalist forces" passed resolutions yesterday that forbid:

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[Redacted]

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- attacks against or kidnapping of Lebanese citizens, regardless of his religious or political affiliation,
- looting or occupation of public and private buildings,
- the carrying of arms in Beirut.

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[Redacted]

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The committee urged that security be maintained by soldiers of the predominantly Shia LAF 6th Brigade and by the Internal Security Force.

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President Assad stuck to familiar Syrian positions yesterday in a two and a half hour-talk with Ambassador Paganelli. Assad remained cordial throughout the meeting, but was visibly annoyed at what he considered the threatening tone of the message Paganelli delivered. He denied that Syria was a party in the fighting--claiming that the US was making war on Lebanon on behalf of the Phalange Party minority--and added that Syria would initiate no action but would respond in kind to attacks on Syrian forces by any party. Assad was harshly critical of Gemayel but never mentioned his resigning. He concluded that the US must "banish the language of the gun" in dealing with Syria, noting that he had never heard a US proposal that took Syrian interests into account.

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According to official Damascus radio reports, Syrian President Assad and Foreign Minister Khaddam met today in Damascus with former Lebanese President Sulayman Franjiyah, former Prime Minister Rashid Karami, and Druze leader Walid Junblatt, who form the opposition National Salvation Front.

- It is likely that the meeting is designed to assess the political situation in Lebanon and to coordinate the next moves of the opposition.

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IRAN-IRAQ WAR

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Iraq has today called in a number of foreign envoys to defend its threat to strike 11 Iranian cities as a measure made necessary by the Iranians' concentrating troops and supplies in those urban areas near the border. Our Interests Section in Baghdad concludes that the Iraqi bombardments are now "imminent."

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

PERSIAN GULF

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Iran has just begun to give much media attention to the removal of the US Marines to ships off the Lebanese coast. Assembly Speaker Rafsanjani and Foreign Minister Velayati have publicly termed the action a "retreat" caused by pressure from Lebanese militants and by US domestic protests over casualties.

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[Redacted]

The UAE ambassador to France died of his wounds yesterday afternoon. A caller claiming to represent the Arab Revolutionary Brigades has claimed responsibility. He maintained that anti-Palestinian and pro-US acts by the UAE had provoked the crime.

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[Redacted]

-- The ARB is linked to Black June (Aba Nidal).

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

The Kuwaitis have closed their embassy in Madrid as a precaution against an Iranian terrorist response to the opening this Saturday of the trial of those accused in the bombings two months ago. Kuwait has privately warned that US diplomatic personnel might also be targets for a hostage-taking intended to free those on trial. [Redacted]

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