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26 June 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM: DDI Working Group on TWA Hijacking

SUBJECT: Iranian Involvement With Terrorism in Lebanon

The Iranian Government is now trying to exploit the hostage situation, even though it does not appear to have been involved in planning or carrying out the hijacking. An overwhelming body of evidence, however, has implicated Iran in the Hizballah campaign of violence against Americans and other Westerners in Lebanon during the past two years. Iran provides substantial material and political support to the Lebanese radical Shias, but it does not control or have advance knowledge of all of their operations. Senior Iranian clerics and Foreign Ministry officials are involved in supporting terrorism in Lebanon.

Iran and the TWA Hijacking

Iranian officials are now clearly encouraging the Hizballah to prolong the hostage situation, but we do not believe that Iran was involved in planning or carrying out the TWA hijacking

Available evidence still suggests that the original hijackers were part of a small group of disgruntled Shias from southern Lebanon acting more or less independently of any larger organization or government.

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Iranian officials became involved, however, after Hizballah elements seized a small number of the Americans during their second stop at Beirut airport.

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Iran and the Hizballah

The Iranian Government maintains an intimate relationship with the Lebanese Shia fundamentalist groups that comprise the Hizballah network. Iran has greatly strengthened the Hizballah during the past two years by providing money, weapons, logistical support, training, and political and religious indoctrination.

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Hizballah leaders have also worked in collusion with Iran on some terrorist operations. The Revolutionary Guards based in the Bekaa Valley are often colocated with Hizballah elements [Redacted]

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Despite Iranian efforts, however, the Hizballah remains largely a domestic Lebanese political movement with its own political agenda. While Iranian assistance may have been critical in 1982 and 1983, the Hizballah movement does not depend on Iran for its existence. Shia fundamentalism, whetted by decades of of Shia deprivation and [Redacted] Israeli occupation, has firmly taken root in Lebanon and has achieved a momentum of its own. Hizballah elements can and often do conduct many of their activities without Iranian foreknowledge.

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Hizballah terrorism is driven by the movement's internal goals. Lebanese Shia fundamentalists do not target Western officials primarily because Iran has ordered them to do so. Hizballah and Iranian cooperation on anti-Western terrorism arises from the shared belief that the first step in an Islamic revolution is the elimination of Western influence from Lebanon. Hizballah leaders share with Iran the ultimate objective of establishing an Islamic state in Lebanon and are therefore often receptive to Iranian encouragement and recommendations. Certain Hizballah elements, however, are also motivated by other concerns, such as a desire to free their Lebanese coreligionists in prison for terrorism in Kuwait and elsewhere.

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The Lebanese Hizballah movement has grown increasingly independent as it has expanded in terms of membership and resources. Hizballah leaders are now serious competitors for the leadership of Lebanon's large Shia population and command the loyalty of perhaps as many as several thousand armed fighters. There is mounting evidence that the Lebanese Shias---although respectful of Khomeini and the Iranian revolution---will no longer tolerate Iranian attempts to dictate their policies. Heavyhanded Iranian behavior and the competition between rival elements within the Iranian Government have also annoyed leaders of the Lebanese Hizballah.

In summary, the Hizballah network has become an autonomous terrorist problem in its own right. Iran supports and advises the Hizballah but cannot control it. It is no longer safe to assume that Iranian officials know in advance about all Hizballah operations.

#### Iranian Involvement in Past Terrorism

While Iran does not appear to be responsible for the current hijacking, there is considerable evidence of Iranian support for past terrorism in Lebanon. Circumstantial evidence indicates that the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut in April 1983 was the work of pro-Iranian Lebanese Shias, but there is no hard evidence directly linking the act to Tehran.

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The "Islamic Jihad Organization," which claimed responsibility for the bombing of the Embassy was probably an Iranian-supported Lebanese Shia group.

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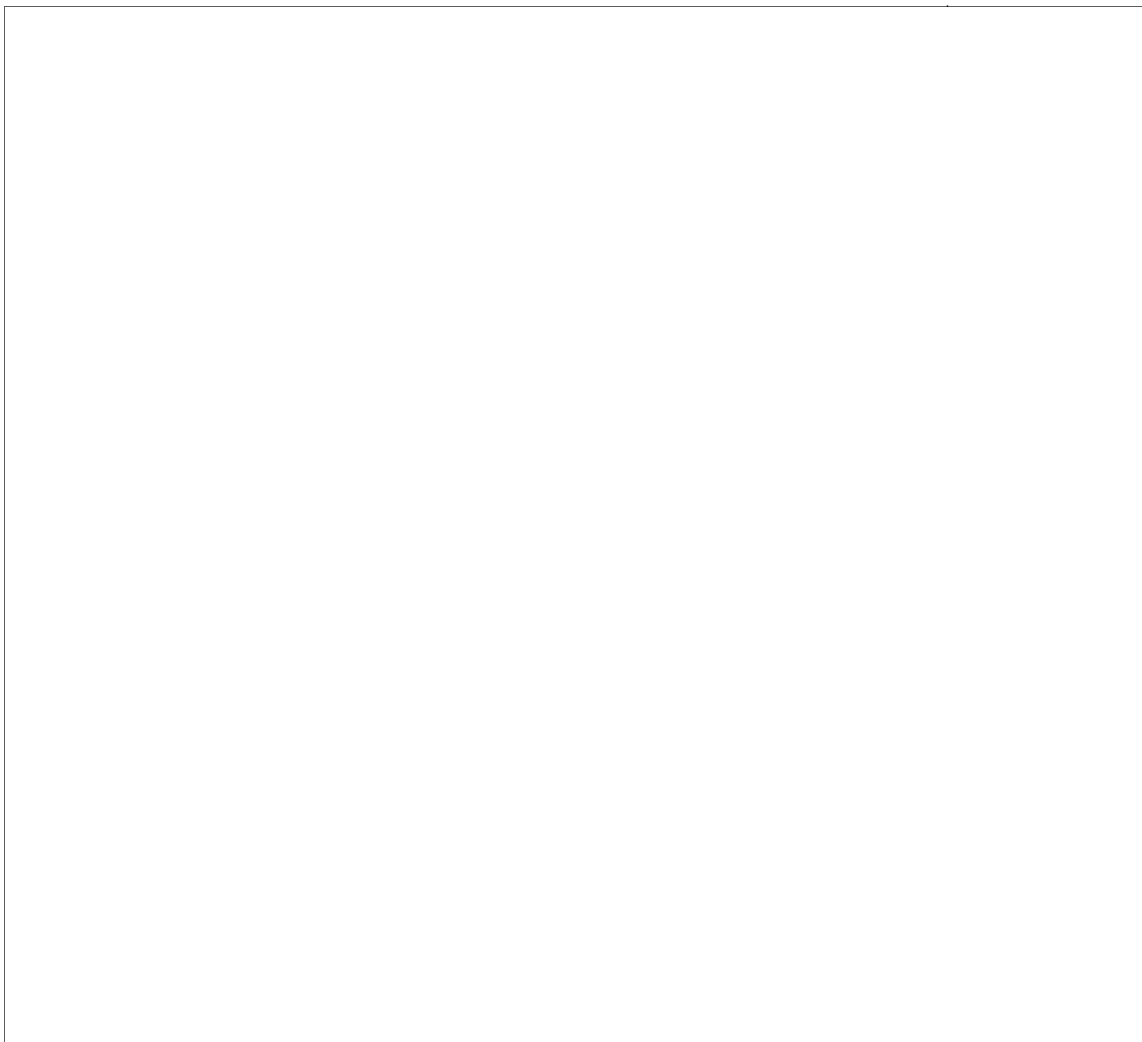
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-- The Jihad Organization had claimed responsibility for the attack in March on the US Marines assigned to the multinational peacekeeping force. It also said it carried out at least one other attack against the French contingent of the multinational force.

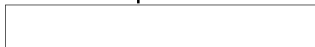


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Evidence also pointed to Iranian-backed Lebanese Shias as perpetrators of the bombing of the US and French Multinational Force contingents in Lebanon during October 1983.



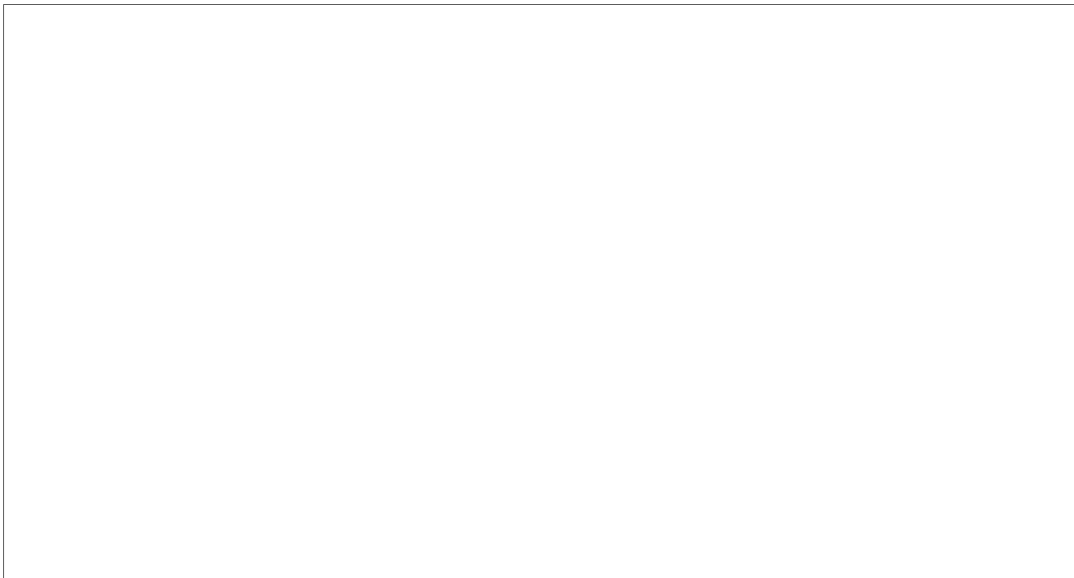
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We also suspect Iran was involved in the bombing of the US Embassy Annex in East Beirut in September 1984, but we have less specific evidence in this case.



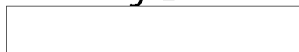
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Iranian Policy Regarding Terrorism

Tehran's support for terrorism stems primarily from the perception of the Khomeini regime that it has a religious duty to export its Islamic revolution and to wage, by whatever means necessary, a constant struggle against the non-Islamic world, particularly the US. Tehran's aim is to eliminate Western influence, overthrow pro-Western regimes, and establish Islamic republics. Iranian leaders--both clerics and laymen--are convinced of the righteousness of Khomeini's brand of Islamic



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fundamentalism and believe that other Muslim societies would benefit from it. This religious motivation provides Iranian leaders with a moral justification for the use of terrorism.

Iranian leaders are divided between Islamic radicals and pragmatists who both support the use of terrorism--although for different reasons--and conservatives and moderates who generally oppose it. Islamic radicals, [redacted]

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[redacted] are major advocates of terrorism as a legitimate tool of state policy. In their view, the fusion of politics and religion justifies any means to export the revolution. Moreover, radical clerics in Qom who may hold no official position within the regime have independent sources of income and are able to finance and support terrorist operations without government approval.

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Pragmatists--such as President Khamenei, Assembly Speaker Rafsanjani, and Ayatollah Montazeri--are willing to support whatever policies, including terrorism, that are likely to further Iranian interests. [redacted]

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[redacted] They support terrorism because it can be a highly effective instrument of policy, but they also recognize the need for improved state-to-state economic relations and have sought to curb radical excesses. The pragmatists prefer to use terrorism selectively, choosing targets important to Iranian national interests rather than purely revolutionary goals.

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Iranian policy on terrorism is now caught up in the internal power struggle among radicals, pragmatists, and conservatives as Iran moves toward the post-Khomeini era. So long as Iranian pragmatists perceive little cost in supporting terrorist operations, the Khomeini regime will continue its deep involvement in terrorism. Moreover, the US will remain a high-priority target for Iranian terrorism barring the unlikely accession of a conservative coalition.



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