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Friday
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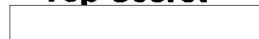
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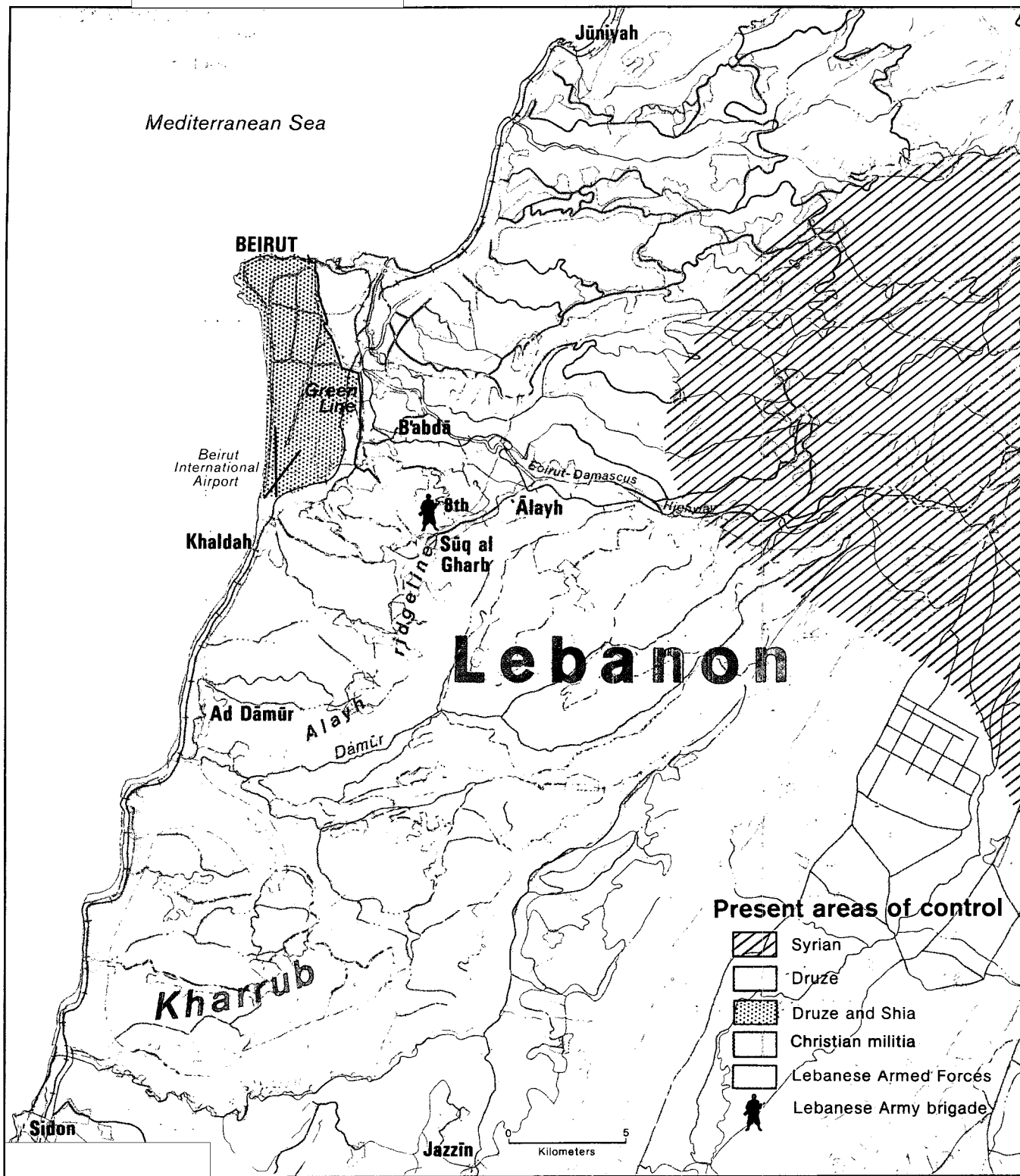
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LEBANON: Deadlock Continues

Saudi Prince Bandar said Thursday that a cease-fire among warring Lebanese factions would be announced today. He said it did not address broader political issues. If a cease-fire goes into effect, it may be a sign that Damascus sees a cessation of the fighting and a return to the political track as an opportunity to reassert control over its allies. 


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Meanwhile, other press reports indicate President Gemayel met yesterday with his father, Phalange Party head Pierre Gemayel; former President Camile Shamun; and Saudi mediator Rafiq Hariri to discuss the latest Syrian proposals. Hariri subsequently left Beirut for Damascus. 

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Comment: The meeting may have been designed to give the Maronite elders an opportunity to warn Hariri that, if pushed too far by Damascus, the government may resort to closer ties with Israel—and possibly seek Israeli military action. 

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Both Shamun and Pierre Gemayel have warned of grave consequences if the President abrogates the accord of 17 May. Gemayel fears that any move on his part to entertain Syrian demands would lead to a violent Christian backlash and the downfall of his government or possibly his assassination. 

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Junblatt's Comments on Gemayel

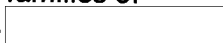
Walid Junblatt took a hard line toward Gemayel in discussions with US Embassy officials in Damascus but said he might settle for some other constitutional means to force the President out of office. He mentioned Shia Amal leader Nabih Barri's proposal that the presidential term be reduced from six years to two. 

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Comment: Syrian pressure on Junblatt may be responsible for any moderation in his longstanding demand that Gemayel resign. His comments, however, may simply be a gesture to placate the US. 

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Pressure on Muslim Soldiers

A senior Muslim officer recently described pressures on Muslim soldiers to leave units in East Beirut as "almost unbearable." Members of Shia Amal have resorted to threats against the families of Shia soldiers unless they refuse to fight their coreligionists. 

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During a meeting with the US Ambassador in Beirut on Wednesday, Barri claimed he had advised Shia soldiers in the 8th Brigade to remain with their units. He added that, if the US decided to back away from helping to defend Suq al Gharb, he would urge the Shia to leave the brigade so they would not be massacred by the Druze at their front and by the Christians at their rear. [Redacted]

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Comment: With the Army splintering and the Gemayel government apparently helpless, Muslim soldiers no longer perceive any purpose in defending the Christian community. Mass desertions may occur in early March because payday is on 29 February and soldiers are usually released to take their pay home. [Redacted]

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IRAN-IRAQ: Iranian Attacks Near Al Basrah

The Iraqis apparently have blunted an Iranian thrust along the border northeast of Al Basrah, but fighting continues near the main road north of the city. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] Iraq expected Iran to launch a major attack in the Al Basrah area, and it claims its troops have crushed both the attack across the marshes and an attack northeast of Al Basrah. Baghdad says its forces have killed over 3,300 Iranians in the fighting northeast of Al Basrah. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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US diplomats in Baghdad report that an Iraqi-backed opposition group based in Tehran is calling on Iraqi Shias to rise against the regime. Iran claims some tribes in the southern marshes of Iraq have joined its forces. [Redacted]

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Comment: The Iranian offensive appears to be directed at severing the main road linking Iraqi forces at Al 'Amarah and those at Al Basrah. Tehran does not yet appear to have launched its main assault either at Al Basrah or on the Central front, but it probably will be ready to do so within a few days. [Redacted]

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FRANCE-US: Defense Minister's Visit

French Defense Minister Hernu, whose visit to the US begins today, is likely to focus on armaments cooperation and the need for closer consultations on Lebanon. [Redacted]

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The US Embassy reports that Hernu specifically will raise the prospective French purchase of the US AWACS. Hernu will discuss the prospects for US purchase of a French-built tactical communications system and ask that the US buy more military equipment to offset the costly AWACS purchase. [Redacted]

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Without such an assurance, Hernu is said to be ready to insist that the US exclude research and development costs from the AWACS price. The French have hinted to the Embassy that they may be willing to consider US use of French bases for AWACS operations in time of crisis. [Redacted]

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The Defense Minister also wants to talk with US officials about better consultation on Lebanon. He reportedly will seek assurances that future US moves will be more closely coordinated than was the announcement of the redeployment of the US contingent of the MNF. [Redacted]

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Comment: The French believe that they are at a disadvantage in arms procurement cooperation. Although Paris has had some recent success in selling its military equipment to the US, the balance of military trade since 1977 is almost 6 to 1 in favor of the US. [Redacted]

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Paris wants to assure that the two-way street in armaments cooperation not operate to the benefit of the US at the expense of the French arms industry. The French have been particularly upset since 1981, when the US canceled the purchase of the Roland surface-to-air missile system. France and West Germany also subsequently lost out in the bidding for a new US Navy trainer when their jointly produced Alpha Jet was not selected. [Redacted]

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FRANCE: Truckers' Protests Continue

The traffic blockades by protesting truckers will have limited political and economic impact, but the action could encourage other groups dissatisfied with the government's economic policies. [Redacted]

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Press reports state some independent truckers are continuing their blockade despite signs that others have given up. The protest began last week as a demand for compensation for lost time and expense caused by a slowdown by customs officials at the Italian border. Truckers are now seeking more concessions, including reduced fuel taxes and more freedom to determine work hours.

[Redacted]

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One recent poll shows that most of the population, which has not yet been affected by the strike, appears sympathetic. Disruptions have begun to occur in shipments of automobile parts and fresh food, however, and there have been isolated incidents of violence. [Redacted]

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On Wednesday, Gaullist opposition leader Chirac referred to a trend of social and economic disturbances since the leftist coalition came to power. This was the first hint that the strike may become a political issue. [Redacted]

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Comment: Trucking in France is mainly handled by independent truckers or small firms, which probably do not have the resources to continue the protests for long. Once the euphoria of their early successes and national attention has diminished, they are likely to be willing to negotiate. [Redacted]

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The real risk is that the truckers' action could encourage other dissatisfied groups to emulate them and increase the already high level of public frustration with the government's austerity program. President Mitterrand and his economic advisers would like to settle the issue before early March, when coal miners are scheduled to hold a protest march in Paris. [Redacted]

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ITALY: Christian Democratic Congress

The Christian Democrats are likely to retain their current leadership and political strategy during their annual congress, which begins today, but some may be tempted to consider Communist hints of interest in cooperation. [redacted]

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The congress is widely expected to retain party secretary DeMita, despite unhappiness over the party's disastrous performance in the national election last June. At recent regional party meetings, support for DeMita among delegates going to the congress was stronger than in 1981. A prominent journalist has suggested to US Embassy officials, however, that DeMita's only announced challenger, Civil Defense Minister Scotti, may be a stalking-horse for a more formidable competitor, Foreign Minister Andreotti. [redacted]

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The press has interpreted remarks made earlier this week by Communist Party leader Berlinguer as a new gesture toward the Christian Democrats and as a reversal of his strategy of seeking closer ties with the Socialists. Berlinguer says his party will follow a hard line aimed at bringing down the government of Prime Minister Craxi and replacing it with a government of administrative specialists, some presumably sympathetic to the Communists. [redacted]

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Comment: DeMita's reelection appears certain, barring a sudden decision by Andreotti to run. DeMita's good prospects, however, are less a sign of strength than a reflection of the party's desire to appear united in the face of anticipated additional losses in the European Parliamentary election this June and in nationwide administrative elections in 1985. [redacted]

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Berlinguer's remarks almost certainly are timed to appeal to those Christian Democrats who are anxious to regain the premiership from the Socialists. A majority of Christian Democrats still favor the current five-party coalition. [redacted]

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Some at the congress, however, may be open to a return to the strategy of 1976-79. During that time, the Christian Democrats and the Communists collaborated to force their will on Parliament on a number of controversial issues. [redacted]

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USSR: Mobile Launcher for SS-X-25

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[Redacted] In October the Soviets told the Standing Consultative Commission in Geneva that the SS-X-25 was then being launched from a mobile launcher. [Redacted]

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Comment: The imprints tend to confirm the estimate that SS-X-25 is being launched from a transporter-erector-launcher. The pattern is similar to those made by the jacks on an SS-16 or SS-20 TEL. The distance between the front and rear pair at the SS-X-25 site, however, is 1.4 meters longer. The first three of the six test launches of the missile were from a silo, but the last three probably were from a TEL. [Redacted]

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WARSAW PACT: Military Exercise Announced

Media in Eastern Europe and the USSR announced on Wednesday that a Warsaw Pact command post exercise, Soyuz-84, will be held next month in Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, the southwestern USSR, and in the Black Sea. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Bucharest states that only its Army General Staff will participate in Romania, where it will conduct a "map exercise." The announcements gave no troop figures. They do not constitute official notification under terms of the Helsinki Accords, which require prior notification of 21 days for exercises involving 25,000 troops or more. [Redacted]

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Comment: Romania's minimal participation is in keeping with past practice. In 1979 the Romanians played a similar role in a Soyuz exercise. [Redacted]

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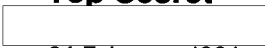
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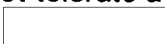


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INDIA: Armed Forces on Alert


The US Embassy reports that the Defense Minister has placed the armed forces on a four-day alert, ostensibly in response to a possible threat from Pakistan. Army officers, however, say that local authorities in strife-ridden Punjab and Haryana have consulted the military about continuing violence between Hindus and Sikhs in their states. The officers expect that paramilitary forces stationed in the troubled areas should be able to contain the unrest without assistance from the Army. 

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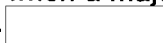
Comment: Prime Minister Gandhi has so far avoided any implication that the violence might require the Army's intervention. She would be likely to call in the Army only as a last resort, in part because Sikhs make up a disproportionately large share of the armed forces. The widely publicized alert probably is designed to show dissidents that Gandhi will not tolerate a prolonged challenge to New Delhi's direct rule of Punjab. 

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PHILIPPINES: Election Reforms

The passage by the National Assembly of several election reforms this week and the decision by the opposition coalition UNIDO to field candidates for the Assembly elections in May probably will encourage other opposition groups to participate. The new reforms include a six-month suspension of President Marcos's right to order that individuals be detained without charges. They stipulate that individuals will not be arrested retroactively, after the deadline passes, for political offenses. The law also allows opposition parties to appoint members to the committees that will monitor the voting. 

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Comment: Marcos presumably hopes that these concessions will make the elections credible and virtually end the boycott movement. Most opposition groups will welcome progress on the issue of the President's detention powers, even though they have been demanding that he abolish them. The success of Marcos's concession strategy will be tested early next week, when a major regional party meets to decide whether to participate. 

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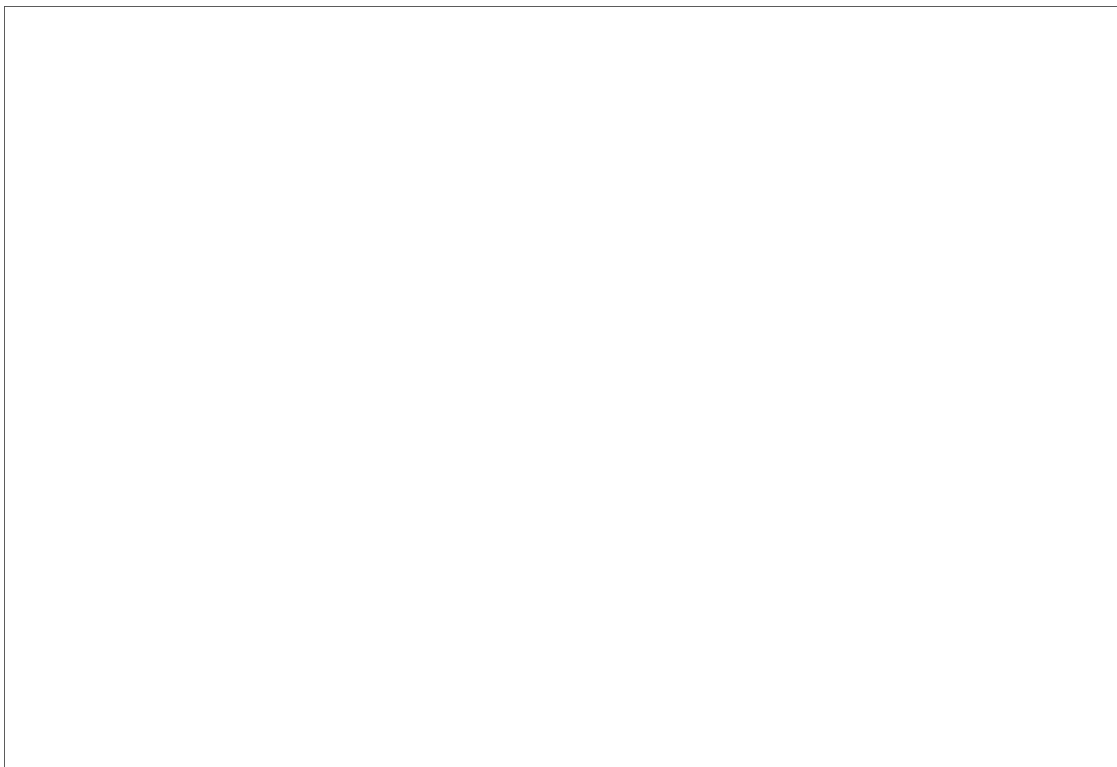
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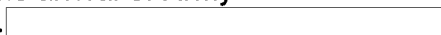
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UGANDA: Guerrilla Attack

Well-armed guerrillas this week attacked police and military installations at Masindi, 225 kilometers north of Kampala. Government forces reportedly fled after offering only slight resistance. The attackers withdrew before the arrival of Army reinforcements, which then looted the town.



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Comment: The attack demonstrates that the insurgents can still strike at will at lightly protected government installations. The incident may encourage additional activity by the guerrillas, but they probably cannot launch large, coordinated attacks against well-defended targets. The Army's ineffectiveness and lack of discipline, however, can only continue to erode popular support for President Obote's regime.



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Special Analysis

IRAN-IRAQ: The Impending Iranian Offensive

The latest round of Iranian attacks is setting the stage for what both sides believe could be the crucial showdown in the war. Iran is preparing a series of major attacks

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[Redacted] *which probably will begin in a few days and could result in extremely heavy fighting. Iran's religious leaders appear determined to try for an outright military victory by overwhelming the Iraqis with large numbers of irregular troops. The Iranians are likely to try to capture several small Iraqi cities near the border and push to the Shatt al Arab, opposite Al Basrah.*

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Iraq is aware of Iran's plans and will try to inflict the maximum number of Iranian casualties. Baghdad hopes heavy losses will increase domestic pressure on Iran's clerics to end the war.

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The Iraqis are likely to employ chemical weapons during the fighting. Moreover, the Iranian attacks will give Baghdad an excuse to attack Iranian oil facilities, dangerously intensifying the threat to the Persian Gulf.

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Iranian Preparations

In the past month senior Iranian religious leaders have been calling for a major offensive to end the war.

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[Redacted]

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Iranian press reports state that Revolutionary Guard and militia troops are being mobilized throughout the country.

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[Redacted]

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Since 12 February, Iran has launched a series of limited attacks designed to throw Iraqi forces off balance and seize tactically important terrain near the border. The attacks also are aimed at putting Iranian units into positions from which they can interfere, at least partially, with Iraq's ability to transfer forces rapidly between fronts. [Redacted]

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Iran appears determined to launch a number of large—and perhaps simultaneous—attacks along the border using large numbers of irregular infantry to overrun and inflict heavy losses on Iraqi forces. Tehran evidently hopes to seize the small Iraqi border towns of Khanaqin and Mandali and push to the Shatt al Arab, opposite Al Basrah. Iran's religious leaders probably believe that substantial Iraqi military losses, combined with the loss of several towns and large-scale civilian evacuations from Al Basrah, would be enough to cause the regime in Baghdad to begin unraveling. [Redacted]

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Iraq's Capabilities

[Redacted]

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Iraq has a 4-to-1 advantage in operational fighter aircraft and a significant edge in armor and artillery firepower. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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An Iraqi Government spokesman hinted on Tuesday that chemical weapons would be used on a large scale in the impending fighting. [Redacted]

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The Iranian offensive also will provide Iraq with a pretext to attack Iranian cities and escalate the war in the Persian Gulf. [Redacted]

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Outlook

The pace of Iranian preparations suggests Tehran will be ready to launch its main offensives in a few days. Both sides appear determined to make a major effort during the coming battles, which points to a period of heavy fighting that could last for several weeks.

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If Iraqi commanders do not make serious tactical errors and the morale of Iraqi troops holds, the Iranians are unlikely to achieve an important breakthrough. Iraq is likely to lose some territory along the border, and Iran's forces may be able to threaten such border towns as Khanaqin or Mandali. The Iranians, however, are likely to have difficulty holding Iraqi territory if Iraq launches determined counterattacks. Iraq's chances of winning a decisive victory will depend heavily on its ability to anticipate and defeat the initial Iranian thrusts.

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In the past, whenever the Iraqis have been able to thwart the Iranians' initial attacks, Baghdad's troops have been able to inflict heavy losses on Tehran's forces. Moreover, properly employed mustard agent should have a devastating effect on the poorly equipped Iranian irregulars that will lead the attack.

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The losses Iran is likely to suffer will strengthen the position of those officials arguing for an end to the fighting. As the extent of the casualties become known, they could lead to protests in Iran.

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Senior leaders are divided on the wisdom of continuing the war, and a sense of war weariness pervades the bulk of the population. Any decision for peace, however, will be made by Ayatollah Khomeini. So far, he shows no sign of wavering in his determination to overthrow President Saddam Husayn.

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With Iran going all-out to achieve a military victory, Baghdad probably will feel free to attack economic targets in the Gulf. The Iraqis are likely to launch attacks on Khark Island, particularly if the war is going poorly on the ground.

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In the past Iraqi attacks have inflicted only marginal damage on the facilities at Khark. Nonetheless, the Iraqi Air Force can cause substantial damage if no regard is given to its own losses—something the Iraqis have been unwilling to do in the past.

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Iran continues to threaten to close the Gulf if its oil exports are seriously disrupted. Initially, Tehran may resort to terrorist and sabotage attacks against Western and oil facilities in the Gulf or airstrikes on Kuwait.

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Despite its threats, Iran has not redeployed air or naval units to augment its forces at Bandar-e Abbas. Iran has naval mines, however, and it could interfere with shipping in the Strait of Hormuz with little warning.

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