



Central Intelligence Agency
Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence

DDI 03179-86

7 JUL 1986

NOTE TO: Director of Central Intelligence
FROM: Deputy Director for Intelligence

We have added material on page 2 that
addresses your suggestions.

[Redacted] 25X1

[Redacted] We'll go ahead 25X1

and make a limited internal distribution of the
study.

[Redacted] 25X1

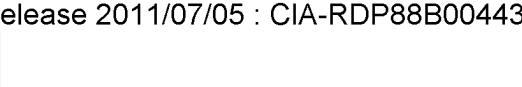
Richard J. Kerr

Attachment:
As stated

CL BY SIGNER
DECL OADR

~~SECRET~~ [Redacted] 25X1

~~SECRET~~



LEBANON: The Analytical Record, 1981-1984

Product Evaluation Staff
July 1986



25X1

~~SECRET~~



25X1

Key Findings

The Directorate of Intelligence and National Intelligence Council deserve high marks for their analysis of Lebanese events between 1981 and 1984.* The quantity of production was enormous and the treatment of issues was thorough. The relevance of analyses to US policy interests was consistently high.

The DI and NIC gave clear warning of a possible Israeli invasion of Lebanon more than a year before it occurred and refined and reissued the warning thereafter. On four other key issues, DI and NIC analyses sent clear and consistent messages to policymakers by:

- Explaining the factors that would undermine the Gemayel regime and chronicling its demise.
- Pointing to the high Syrian interest in Lebanon and to growing Syrian intransigence.
- Giving full and complete coverage to Palestinian issues.
- Analyzing the obstacles to implementation of the September 1982 peace initiative.

In general, DI and NIC analyses carefully considered each aspect of the Lebanese problem, showed how the aspects would interact within Lebanon and how repercussions would be felt throughout the Middle East, and traced the impact of outside influences.

While the Agency can be satisfied with its analytical effort on Lebanon in the 1981-84 period, we identified one problem area that is worthy of attention. Analysts felt themselves to be almost completely cut out of information on the policymaking process, particularly as it related to negotiations for the May 1983 accord. This led to gaps in production when US involvement in Lebanon was most intense. It also led to delays in accurately assessing the intentions of other participants in the Lebanese imbroglio. For example, we were slow off the mark in identifying growing Syrian intransigence. Analysts and lower-level managers must do their part, on a day-to-day basis, to maintain contacts with policymakers. But when policy is being made at a high level, our customers and our own representatives need to make a conscious effort to keep analysts apprised of how their work can best support the policymaking process.

*This study was prepared by the Product Evaluation Staff of the Directorate of Intelligence at the request of the Director of Central Intelligence.

SECRET

25X1

Two other matters came to light in our study of Lebanon. They were not serious problems in this case, but they could easily become so in other policy-sensitive situations:

- Distribution. Many of the most important analytical messages the DI and NIC sent on Lebanon were contained initially in memos that went to a very small number of people, sometimes only one or two. There was thus the potential danger that others in the policymaking community might not have received the same analytical line as the select few. This did not appear to happen in the Lebanese case, because the DI and NIC made a conscious and successful effort to ensure that basic analytical themes were promulgated in a variety of publications.
- Boldness. Analytical points were, however, put most clearly and confidently in the memos that received very limited distribution. NIEs and SNIEs had a certain tendency toward fuzziness, and NID Special Features tended to surround some key analytical points with too much general analysis of broad trends.

S
K E I

Lebanon: The Analytical Record, 1981-1984

Table of Contents

	<u>Page No.</u>
Key Findings	i
Table of Contents	iii
I. The Quality of Analysis	1
II. Other Characteristics of the Product.	4



25X1

I. The Quality of Analysis

To test the quality of DI and NIC analysis on Lebanon, we focused on five key issues:

- The warning of war prior to the Israeli invasion on 6 June 1982.
- The status of the Gemayel government after September 1982.
- Syrian interests in Lebanon.
- The impact of the Israeli invasion on the PLO.
- Prospects for the US peace initiative of September 1982.

These issues permit conclusions to be drawn about how well the DI and NIC did in two crucial functions of intelligence analysis: warning and long-term forecasting.

On warning of war, the DI and NIC record is virtually without blemish.

DI and NIC analysis did not foresee a ground advance as far as Beirut, but the Israeli leadership itself may not have realized that such a push was Defense Minister Sharon's intention.

The DI and the NIC had built a strong analytical foundation for assessing the status of the Gemayel government by their earlier work on the problems of confessionalism in Lebanon. The gradual weakening of Gemayel's position was chronicled in the NID, and by July 1983 DI memoranda were sounding a clear and strong pessimistic note.

While DI and NIC analysis portrayed Lebanon as vital to Syrian interests, judgments about Syrian willingness to pull out of Lebanon were not consistent or clear until mid-1983, when Syria denounced the US-sponsored peace accord. After that, the increasingly intransigent Syrian position was addressed forthrightly in DI and NIC publications.

DI and NIC coverage of issues related to the Palestinians was consistently thorough, accurate, and forward-looking.

Coverage of prospects for the September 1982 peace initiative balanced careful assessments of the stumbling blocks to success with broader judgments of the need for the United States to remain an active broker in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

SECRET

25X1

In looking at these five issues, PES was struck by the manner in which the integrative focus of the longer analyses provided the contextual understanding needed to assess US goals and policies in Lebanon. From early 1981, when NESAs and the NIC began to warn of deteriorating security conditions in Lebanon and the threat of an Israeli invasion, the analysts examined potential developments in terms of the US general position in the Middle East and prospects for specific peace proposals. The assessment of prospects for US policy became particularly marked from October 1983 onward, with the issuance in rapid succession of three SNIEs.

These three estimates were issued at a particularly sensitive juncture: by September 1983 the US military role in Lebanon had evolved from an essentially passive one to a more active one and the security situation was changing rapidly.

The first of the three SNIEs appeared 13 days before the bombing of the Marine Headquarters in October. Entitled "Prospects for Lebanon," it was initiated by the Intelligence Community to examine prospects for Lebanon in light of the deteriorating security situation. Its focus was primarily internal and its message was bleak (see pp 9-10 of this report for details). The estimate delivered an unwelcome message to policymakers, who were considering increases in the application of US force in Lebanon.

Dissatisfied with the October SNIE, senior policymakers, notably Secretary of State Shultz, asked that a fresh look be taken, with particular emphasis given to factoring in the US military role. This led to the issuance of a second estimate in December 1983, "Implications of the Military Balance of Power in Lebanon." As the title indicates, greater attention was paid to the role of outside players--especially Syria and the United States--in the Lebanese political equation. But the message delivered by this SNIE was also depressing. The key judgments noted that the "incremental application of US and/or Israeli military power will not induce a major shift in Syrian goals in Lebanon... Greater US and Israeli involvement in Lebanon without a domestic political accommodation is likely to polarize Lebanese politics."

The third SNIE, written just a month later, also responded to the desire of senior policy officials to reexamine prospects in light of new developments. This estimate reaffirmed the judgments of the December 1983 study, and, by the time that it was issued, a decision to withdraw US forces from Lebanon was taking shape.

In addition to warning of deteriorating security conditions, DI and NIC products examined the reactions of other regional states to developments in Lebanon. The analysis treated the Middle East as a highly interdependent, pressure-sensitive system of states, and it examined the repercussions of changes on that system as well as the influence on it by outside players.

Analysts addressed not only developments in Lebanon itself and Syrian and Israeli interests there, but also looked at the impact of the Israeli invasion on an Arab-Israeli peace and issues such as the Soviet posture in the region. Developments in Lebanon had an important impact on countries, both radical and moderate, throughout the Middle East, and NESAs Persian Gulf Division, along with its Arab-Israeli Division, was drawn into the analytical process.

PES also found that the isolation of the analysts from information on the negotiating process had a major impact on DI and NIC production. This was reflected both in the time profile of production and in the inability of analysts to comment at an early stage on the prospects for the Lebanese-Israeli accord of May 1983. A great deal of vital information was passed through NODIS channels and via secure telephone links, and a general lack of DI access to such information, even on a delayed basis, undermined the ability of analysts to anticipate in advance how regional actors would adjust their policies. NESAs officers felt that this problem had been particularly telling in their failure before late summer 1983 to recognize the hardening of Syria's position on withdrawal from Lebanon.

Once Israel had invaded Lebanon in June 1982, most DI and NIC production, other than that in the NID and PDB, was driven by requests from senior policymakers and/or senior Agency officials. (See Appendix B, which differentiates papers given very limited distribution and those given wider exposure.) Such requests generally were not made in late 1982 and early 1983, the period that bracketed the September 1982 initiative and the signing of the Lebanese-Israeli accord.

As a result, relative to the overall body of production issued between 1981 and 1984, coverage declined in this period, except in the current intelligence dailies. Nearly a year elapsed between the issuance of one SNIE in November 1982 ("PLO: Impact of the Lebanese Incursion") and the next in October 1983 ("Prospects for Lebanon"). In that one-year period, events had taken a dramatic turn for the worse, both in terms of Gemayel's position and Syria's attitudes toward Lebanon.

Analysts remained isolated from some sensitive policy information until the denouement of US involvement in Lebanon, but increasing debate in Washington on US policy options and increasing requests from policymakers for analysis paved the way for an explosion of NESAs and NIC production in late 1983 and early 1984. The withdrawal of Israel from the Shuf and Alayh districts in mid-1983 led to heightened concern both with the role of the Syrians and other outside actors in Lebanon and with US military vulnerability there. The bombing of the US Marine headquarters in October 1983 gave further impetus to the production of carefully documented analysis.

II. Other Characteristics of the Product

Developments in Lebanon from 1981 to 1984 received heavy and thorough treatment by the DI and the NIC. Both the DI and NIC significantly increased their production in the spring of 1981 as fighting intensified between Syria and Christian elements in Lebanon, the Israelis challenged the Syrians in air battles over Lebanon, and Damascus moved SA-6 missiles into the Bekaa Valley. By the time of the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon on 6 June 1982, the twin issues of deteriorating conditions in Lebanon and Israeli options for a major military operation had been covered in:

- An Interagency Alert Memorandum and two SNIEs.
- Fourteen widely disseminated write-ups of monthly warning meetings chaired by the NIO for the Near East.
- One intelligence memorandum, one broadly disseminated typescript, and seven limited distribution typescripts (three of them for internal use only), all prepared by NESAs.

Once the invasion occurred, the pace of production, in both the current intelligence dailies and longer interpretive pieces, gained further momentum.

- Between June and October 1982, a DI Task Force produced daily situation reports.
- At least one, and often two articles, appeared daily in the NID for the first several months. Thereafter, several items appeared weekly until the withdrawal of US forces in early 1984.
- Four SNIEs were published between November 1982 and January 1984. In addition, the NIC issued an Interagency Intelligence Assessment just after the invasion, [redacted] and two informal memoranda.
- NESAs produced six hard-copy intelligence assessments on Lebanese and Syrian developments, 31 significant typescript memoranda on various aspects of the Lebanese problem, and a steady flow of publications on Israeli, Jordanian, and Persian Gulf developments relevant to Lebanon.
- Finally, NESAs produced a sizeable number of talking points and specialized pieces of analysis for the DCI, DDCI, and DDI. Between July and November 1983, for example, it wrote 34 such pieces, many of which served to prepare senior Agency officers for policy meetings at the White House.

25X1
25X1
25X1

- The NIO's monthly warning meetings provided continued coverage of Lebanon.

Although a good portion of the NESAs product was given very limited distribution, as shown in Appendix B, PES believes that all major consumers in Washington had access, through one set of publications or another, to key intelligence conclusions. This was due to two factors: concordance of views among analysts within the intelligence community, which resulted in consistency in the messages carried by various intelligence formats, and the clarity of the basic analytical messages.

Frequent and fruitful exchanges among intelligence community analysts are mirrored, among other places, in the record of the monthly warning meetings convened by the NIO and the memoranda issued following these meetings. Lebanon was, for example, a key topic of discussion ten times in 1981 as well as in each month of 1982 prior to the invasion. In January 1981, seventeen months before Israel invaded Lebanon, the warning meeting had focused on the issue of a large scale move, noting that "a beleaguered Begin might try a military spectacular." When the invasion at last occurred, the analysts had had over a year of working together on the issue of Israeli actions and their likely repercussions.

Most of the memoranda produced for a limited number of consumers, or for internal use only, were complemented by coverage of that same issue in the NID. For example, on 20 January 1983, NESAs produced for internal use only a memorandum entitled "The SA-5s in Syria: Israeli and Syrian Attitudes." In the same timeframe (January to February 1983), it authored 25 articles on the SA-5s for the NID, including seven articles that were two or more pages in length.

Similarly, multiple media were used to examine the question of fighting that flared in the Shuf district in late summer 1983.

- Between 24 August and 12 September 1983, NESAs produced four limited distribution typescript memoranda that looked at the question of responsibility for the fighting. The first went to General Vessey; the second to the [redacted], INR, and the NSC; the third to the NSC; and the fourth to senior Agency officials.

REV 1
25X1

- On 3 October 1983, CIA and DIA analysts, at the request of the NSC, jointly produced a memorandum, entitled "Intelligence Reassessment of Recent Developments in Lebanon," that also addressed the issue of possible Syrian involvement in the fighting.
- The fighting in the Shuf was also given heavy coverage in the NID.

REI

The NID concluded that direct Syrian involvement in the fighting was unlikely but that Damascus was a major factor in the political and military strengthening of the Palestinians and Muslims fighting the government. These judgments were embedded in longer NID articles that focused on Syrian interests overall in Lebanon. In contrast, the special memoranda focused clearly on whether foreign powers, especially Syria, were engaged in the shooting which by this time threatened US Marine positions. The evidence for foreign government involvement was examined in detail, particularly in the memorandum prepared for internal use only on 12 September. The issue had great immediacy for senior

25X1

The differences in the treatment of the Shuf fighting in the limited distribution memoranda and the current intelligence dailies illustrate what PES found to be fairly constant factors in the analytical treatment of Lebanon. First, the clearest and most confident judgments are found in NESA's typescript memoranda. Second, the analysis in these memoranda was the most explicit in addressing the implications for the United States of Lebanese developments.

Judgments in NESA memoranda were expressed with a high degree of confidence, even while incorporating analyses of alternative scenarios. Judgments in the SNIes paralleled those seen in NESA typescripts, but PES found the language in these community products marginally less pointed. And, simply because the SNIes were issued at less frequent intervals than NESA's ad hoc typescript memoranda, the SNIes in most cases were unable to focus on tactical questions.

Previous postmortems on DI production have pointed to the NID as a weak link in conveying important analytical messages. An unpublished appraisal produced by the DI in 1973 on the October 1973 Middle East war noted "a tendency in current intelligence analysis to focus on the latest information received just before." The official NFAC postmortem on Iran written in 1979 said that NID "analysis often stops short of stating the full implications of the information presented" and that "the pessimistic inferences had to be drawn from the stories, rather than being presented as key messages."

PES believes that neither of these earlier characterizations applies to the NID coverage of Lebanon between 1982 and 1984. The NID was obviously not an appropriate medium in which to convey some of the more sensitive policy-relevant judgments found in the typescripts and later SNIes--for example, the conclusion of a December 1983 SNIE that "incremental application of US and/or Israeli military power will not induce a major shift in Syrian goals in Lebanon." But the thorough coverage of Lebanon in the NID, with its balance of tactical reporting and stand-back Special Analyses, by and large conveyed clear analytical messages and gave policymakers the insights needed to judge the viability of US policy initiatives and military involvement.

Appendix A: The Five Case StudiesThe Israeli Invasion

The Agency provided policymakers early warning of the likelihood of an Israeli invasion on at least three occasions in 1981. An Alert Memorandum sent to the NSC on 30 April 1981, provided an initial warning of "an increasing possibility of a major Israeli incursion in the south (of Lebanon)." A NESAs memo, "The Lebanese Crisis," prepared a day earlier for Vice President Bush and Secretary Weinberger also cited the increased prospect of a "major Syrian-Israeli confrontation" and the "consideration apparently being given (by Israel) to a major military move into southern Lebanon."

Although conflict between Syria and Israel had been temporarily averted by US diplomacy, the community concluded in the 21 May 1981 SNIE on Lebanon "that violence and tension will remain at dangerously high levels for the foreseeable future in Lebanon." It went on to point out that the Israelis "are eager to strike at the Palestinians in the south."

Despite the relative calm that followed the July 1981 cease-fire agreement, NESAs remained wary and noted in a December 1981

25X1

[redacted] In February 1982 a SNIE, "Lebanon: Prospects for Expanded Hostilities," characterized the cease-fire as "extremely fragile" and concluded that chances were growing that it would "collapse in the next few months or even weeks."

25X1

25X1

The question of what would provide sufficient provocation for such an invasion was briefly examined in the February 1982 SNIE on Lebanon. The community stated that although Begin assured the United States that "Israel would not undertake a large scale operation against the Palestinians without provocation, we believe that it would not take much to constitute such a provocation."

In a 1 March 1982 memorandum to the DCI, NESAs described in more definitive terms what Begin would regard as a clear provocation warranting a response. Among the provocations listed were the resumption of the shelling of northern Israel and a Palestinian attack on an Israeli target--such as an embassy--outside Israel. In the aftermath of the early June attempted

assassination of Ambassador Argov in London and continued Palestinian shelling of northern Israel, the NID on 5 June 1982 reported that Begin "will find it difficult to resist pressures from hardliners" to invade.

25X1

25X1

The Status of Gemayel

Amin Gemayel, hastily elected president of Lebanon following the assassination of Bashir in September 1982, came to power in a period when DI production other than that in the current intelligence dailies was at a relative low point. A SNIE published in November 1982 dealt primarily with the impact of Israel's invasion on the PLO, and a more broadly based assessment (SNIE 36.4-83, "Prospects for Lebanon") was not published until October 1983. The DI and NIC had done a thorough job, however, in documenting the problems of confessionalism in Lebanon even

before the Israeli invasion took place, and this understanding informed the earliest analysis on Gemayel, including two typescript memoranda prepared for his visit to Washington in October 1982.

Between October 1982 and July 1983, the burden of assessing Gemayel's prospects and problems fell to the current intelligence dailies. Coverage in the NID provided both quick reaction analysis of breaking developments and, in six "Special Analyses" on Lebanese domestic affairs, assessments of broader trends. PES found that these "Special Analyses," in particular, kept the readers abreast of the gradual process whereby Gemayel's position weakened.

NESA sounded a note of pessimism even more clearly and strongly in two typescript memoranda sent to key consumers at the White House and the Departments of State and Defense in July and August 1983. The first, "Bleak Prospects for the Gemayel Government," spoke of a failure to achieve US policy objectives in Lebanon. The second, "Lebanon: After Gemayel," noted that the imminent withdrawal of the Israelis from the Shuf and Alayh districts confronted Gemayel with the prospect of fierce Christian-Druze fighting and his most serious crisis to date. The memorandum went on to talk of possible coups, assassinations, and succession scenarios.

NESA memoranda issued through February 1984 continued to take a pessimistic line on Gemayel's ability to make hard compromises and reestablish control of the political process and raised again the possibility of Gemayel's replacement.

There is no doubt that the tone of the three estimates issued in late 1983 and early 1984 was pessimistic, and they were read with dismay by senior policy officials still trying to fashion a diplomatic compromise for Lebanon. Even so, we found the messages less pointed than those conveyed in the NESA memoranda. And, while they were consistent on most analytical points, the changes in focus from one to another introduced some element of difficulty in appreciating the pace at which conditions were deteriorating. We found this to be true in particular in the case of the January 1984 SNIE ("Implications of the Military Balance of Power in Lebanon--Memorandum to Holders").

The October 1983 estimate, "Prospects for Lebanon," was very pessimistic, noting in the first line of the key judgments that "The prospects for a lasting political reconciliation among Lebanon's confessional factions are extremely bleak." It predicted that we could "expect a weak central government which probably can maintain control over Beirut but which has to contend with autonomous Maronite and Druze heartlands and prolonged Syrian and Israeli occupation." The December 1983 estimate, "Implications of the Military Balance of Power in Lebanon," took a similar line, but, reflecting new developments,

SECRET

put heavier emphasis on outside players, including Syria and the United States.

The January 1984 memorandum to holders noted early in its key judgments that the basic conclusions of the December estimate remained valid, but cited two new developments which warranted an updated assessment. These were the agreement in principle by Lebanese confessional factions, the Syrians, and Israelis to a security plan that would expand central government control, and the extension of Lebanese Army authority to the Sabra-Shatilla camp area. The January memorandum to holders reaffirmed the earlier estimative judgment that Gemayel would be unable to deal effectively with his Lebanese rivals. But the overall tenor of the publication conveyed what in retrospect appears to PES to be a slightly blurred message on prospects for Gemayel and the central government.

Syrian Interests

Treatment of Syrian interests appeared throughout DI and NIC coverage of Lebanon, but the tenor of that coverage and the prominence that it received underwent a significant change in mid-1983. Compared to the four other substantive issues examined in this section, the role of Syria in Lebanon was treated with relatively less confidence prior to that date. Before that, PES found sometimes inconsistent and wavering judgments regarding Syria's willingness to pull out of Lebanon.

From mid-1983 onward, after Syrian reactions to the Lebanese-Israeli accord could be measured, however, the analysis produced by both the DI and NIC showed considerable consistency and clarity in its judgments. In fact, the recognition of Syria's determination to remain in Lebanon and to expand its support for radical Muslim elements was a major factor underlying DI and NIC pessimism regarding the prospects for US peace initiatives and the status of Gemayel.

With ground units in Lebanon since 1976, Syria was recognized as an interested party and treated as such in early DI and NIC products. Memoranda given limited distribution in early 1981, as well as the SNIE issued in February 1982, came to two basic conclusions:

- Assad viewed Lebanon as a vital element in his regional strategy and would defend Syria's right to a military presence there.
- While Syria sought to avoid direct military confrontation with Israel, it would accept losses to protect its equities in Lebanon.

Over the next year, the analysis did not challenge these assumptions per se, but it began to include suggestions that Syria might withdraw its forces under favorable circumstances

and/or judgments that Syrian forces might be expelled. In January 1983, for example, a memorandum on the SA-5s, which was given only internal distribution, noted that "Syria continues to profess a willingness to withdraw its forces from Lebanon....Assad probably views a mutual withdrawal of Israeli and Syrian forces as contributing to Syrian security." The SA-5s were viewed as a tactical move, designed to improve Assad's bargaining position, but not as a sign that he had altered "his willingness to withdraw, once Syria's security concerns are satisfied."

Following Syria's denunciation of the US-sponsored peace accord of 17 May 1983, analysis of Syrian intentions began to change course. PES found this to be a gradual rather than an abrupt shift, which probably mirrored the evolution of Assad's position as he observed Gemayel's deteriorating situation and Israel's weakening resolve to remain in northern Lebanon. In the June to October period of 1983, Syrian intentions and activities in Lebanon became the top focus and preoccupation of DI analysis.

By late June both the current intelligence dailies and NESAs longer memoranda were addressing the constant factor of Syria's intransigence, but only with the issuance of a SNIE ("Prospects for Lebanon") in October 1983, did the analytical community present an assessment of the altered power balance in Lebanon. Similar judgments appeared on 12 October in a memorandum that CIA and INR analysts prepared for Ambassador McFarlane on "Dealing with Syria in Lebanon." (McFarlane had gone to Lebanon in August to seek new means for negotiating a Syrian withdrawal.) A significant piece of analysis, this memorandum addressed head on the issue of Syria's intransigence and the implications of this for Lebanon and the United States.

Concerns about Syria grew even sharper following the bombing of our Marine Headquarters in Beirut on 23 October 1983, [redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

[redacted] The SNIE ("Implications of the Military Balance of Power") issued in December 1983, the Memo to Holders follow-up of January 1984, and a NESAs memorandum prepared for passage to President Reagan in February 1984 ("Syria: Reaction to Unilateral Israeli Withdrawal") all made the same key points: Syrian resolve in Lebanon was unassailable and nearly all national reconciliation efforts were thus doomed to failure.

The Palestinians

Issues related to the Palestinians--including the impact of an Israeli invasion, the evolution of PLO politics, and prospects for an Arab-Israeli peace--received both early and frequent coverage in NESAs and NIC analysis. Indeed, all of the above concerns were addressed and skillfully interwoven in a NESAs typescript memorandum, "The Impact of an Israeli Attack on the

PLO," that was disseminated in March 1982, three months before Israel drove into southern Lebanon. (A SNIE, entitled "Lebanon: Prospects for Expanded Hostilities" and issued in February 1982, also addressed Palestinian issues, but only briefly.)

The NESA paper is notable not only because it looked ahead but also because it touched on what would become many of the issues of enduring concern regarding the Palestinian movement. These included:

- Arafat's ability to remain as head of the PLO.
- The probable strengthening of leftists and radicals within the organization.
- Challenges to Arafat's emphasis on diplomatic means of dealing with Palestinian problems.
- Prospects for increased Palestinian-sponsored terrorism.
- Palestinian support for Iranian destabilization efforts in the Gulf states.

Once Israel had invaded, DI and NIC analysis regarding Arafat's short-term prospects shifted in accordance with his changing fortunes. Even so, underlying a NESA typescript memorandum of late June 1982 and a SNIE of October 1982 ("PLO: Impact of the Lebanese Incursion") was the more fundamental judgment that his long-term position had eroded.

In PES' judgment, the most significant piece written on the Palestinians in the 1982-1984 timeframe was NESA's typescript, "The Fatah Mutiny: Implications for the Peace Process," issued in June 1983. Concluding that both Arafat and Washington had been dealt a major blow, the analysis hit two themes that would prove key to understanding unfolding events in Lebanon and prospects for the Reagan peace initiative. These were the growing influence of Syria over the PLO and the diminishing ability of Arafat to fashion a strategy that would mesh with US hopes for linking the PLO and Jordan in peace talks.

After mid-1983, treatment of the PLO declined in relative terms in the major DI and NIC publications as the focus of US attention and concern turned to Syria's hardening position in Lebanon and the deterioration of Gemayel's position. The NID gave heavy coverage to the PLO--seven "Special Analyses" on the PLO were published between June 1983 and February 1984--but in this medium, too, the emphasis had shifted to Assad and Gemayel. NID analysis of the PLO was consistent with that of NESA's June 1983 memorandum and continued to point out the consequences of Arafat's declining fortunes for a negotiated Arab-Israeli peace.

The Peace Process

In defining the scope of this study, PES found that the key analytical concerns associated with the Lebanese crisis could be examined effectively in the 1981-1984 timeframe. The issue of an Arab-Israeli peace, however, demands that we examine also developments that occurred following the US withdrawal from Lebanon.

As noted throughout this paper, DI and NIC products paid early attention to how developments in Lebanon would affect the broader Arab-Israeli peace process. Even before Israel had invaded Lebanon, NESAs warned that such an action would likely radicalize the PLO and make it far more difficult to engage the Palestinians in a search for diplomatic solutions to their problems. The analysis had also turned that equation around. The SNIE of May 1981, entitled "Lebanon," said that an enduring settlement in Lebanon was unlikely outside the context of an Arab-Israeli settlement.

Between mid-1982 and early 1984, eleven Special Analyses in the NID and a number of shorter pieces had addressed aspects of the peace process issue. And, in the nine months following the announcement of President Reagan's September 1982 initiative, four major publications devoted significant space to the issue. These were:

- The SNIE, "PLO: Impact of the Lebanese Incursion," issued in November 1982.
- An Intelligence Assessment, "Jordan, the West Bank, and the Peace Process," April 1983.

- A typescript memorandum, "The Fatah Mutiny: Implications for the Peace Process," June 1983.

The typescript on the mutiny--distributed only within the DI and to the NSC--is of particular interest because it was the last detailed look that the analysts gave to the peace process prior to the withdrawal of US forces from Lebanon in early 1984.

"The Fatah Mutiny" memorandum laid out a series of conclusions that were unrelievedly bleak in their implications for US interests in promoting a Palestinian solution in the West Bank-Gaza territories. Similar themes and conclusions were expanded on in an NIE, "Outlook for the Palestinians," issued in August 1984. The Key Judgments of that estimate opened with the observation that "The Arab states are unlikely over the next two to three years at least to cooperate with the United States in negotiating a solution to the Palestinian issue." The primary cause that it cited for that bleak assessment was the same raised

nearly a year earlier in the NESAs memorandum, namely that Arafat could no longer speak for the PLO and permit King Hussein to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians.

NIC and DI analysis on the peace process produced since early 1985 has been more voluminous than that issued in the 1981-84 period. While hardly deserving to be labelled optimistic, it has balanced negative assessments of prospects for the September 1982 proposal with positive judgments about the need for the United States to be seen by both Arabs and Israelis as an active broker in the peace process. PES found no significant points of divergence in the NIC and DI analysis, although the heavier coverage given Arafat and the PLO in NESAs ad hoc typescript memoranda has tended at times to give the DI product a more pointedly negative tone.

Two NIEs were issued last year. The first, dated January 1985 and entitled "The Middle East Peace Process," reevaluated prospects for the 1982 initiative in light of new developments: the installation of Peres's unity government, Arafat's then improved status within the PLO, and the early signs of an emerging moderate Arab alignment. It looked for windows of opportunity for US policy, but its assessment was generally pessimistic, with the estimate noting in its first line that the Intelligence Community saw "little prospect for any major breakthrough in the Middle East peace process in the months ahead."

The September 1985 estimate, "Opposition to the Arab-Israeli Peace Process: Syrian and Soviet Options," focused, as its title indicates, on two countries determined to act as spoilers. It, too, detailed the obstacles to a breakthrough, although it catalogued in its introduction the rationale for continued US efforts to seek a solution to the Palestinian problem.

NESA production of the past two years also has addressed the issue of US involvement in the peace process. This has been most pronounced in two articles that appeared in the biweekly NESA Review: "What If the Arab-Israeli Peace Process Were to Collapse?" (27 September 1985) and "Arab-Israeli Affairs: The Outlook from Tel Aviv" (14 February 1986).

The NESAs product is more notable, however, for its carefully documented reporting on the ups and downs of Arafat's position within the PLO and the emphasis given to the PLO as the key variable in the complex negotiating equation. NESAs assessments of Arafat have rested on two basic judgments: first, that he is temperamentally unsuited to make tough compromises, and, second, that PLO politics constrain his freedom of maneuver. The DI has viewed Arafat in this light even while taking note of tactical gains, such as his convening the Palestine National Council in November 1985 in Amman. These assessments assumed even greater strength following developments in late 1984 (the Israeli strike against Tunis and the hijacking of the Achille Lauro), which led

NESA to conclude in a October 1985 typescript memorandum that Arafat is now more vulnerable to pressures from Fatah hardliners who have advocated a militant posture for the PLO.

Page Denied

Next 12 Page(s) In Document Denied