

JACK ANDERSON COMMENTARY - "GOOD MORNING AMERICA" - 20 OCTOBER 1982

"Good morning, Joan. There is a fascinating story behind the Washington visit of Lebanon's new President Amin Gemayel. The story is told in documents that are locked in the secret files of the Central Intelligence Agency. Now these documents describe the behind the scene skirmishing between Israel and the United States over the future of Lebanon. The CIA correctly anticipated the Israeli invasion of Lebanon more than a year before it happened. Now let me read a passage dated March 6, 1981. It is stamped Secret. "Israel's incursions into Lebanon, if not imminent are nevertheless inevitable." I am still quoting, "The question is not so much whether or when such incursions will occur, but the scope and purpose of such incursions and their potential for igniting a wider and more dangerous confrontation." CIA not only expected the Israelis to move into Lebanon but warned that Israel would use its christian connections to dominate the future Lebanese Government. The CIA, therefore, sought to counteract Israel's influence by secretly supporting the same Christian militias. Let me read from an excerpt from a Top Secret CIA memo. "It is concluded that the Agency should provide military and financial assistance as requested to the phalanges militias. Should the militias remain solely dependent upon Israeli support, the U.S. will forfeit all influence in a post incursion environment." So the CIA secretly funded the christian phalanges. This gave the United States the ear of its leader, Bashir Gemayel. Washington persuaded him to resist Israeli pressure and to refuse to sign a treaty with Israel. Bashir's assassination brought his brother, Amin Gemayel, to power. The United States immediately courted him. In response, he flew to Washington and called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Lebanon including Israeli forces. This means that the Reagan Administration has successfully out maneuvered Israel. As one Israeli leader grumbled privately, 'Lebanon will now become a U.S. protectorate.' David."