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In an effort to score points, some issues are oversimplified

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WASHINGTON - Both President Ronald Reagan and Walter F. Mondale during last night's debate seemed to oversimplify and exaggerate at times in an effort to score political points.

● Reagan said about Lebanon that the United States "never initiated any action" in the war except in direct defense of the Marines there. Neither Mondale nor the panelists brought up American naval gunfire against a key mountain town above Beirut that was aimed at preventing the collapse of the forces of the Lebanese government.

● Reagan, in trying to explain the controversial pamphlet advising antigovernment forces in Nicaragua on political assassination and other questionable activities, said a draft of the document had been turned over to the local CIA head in Nicaragua who excised some pages and then forwarded it to CIA headquarters in Washington.

When a reporter noted that he was acknowledging for the first time publicly the CIA role in the supposedly covert war, he caught himself to the point of at least saying the local CIA man was not in Nicaragua but "down there in the area."

● Reagan misrepresented the situation when he suggested the Carter Administration undermined the Shah of Iran and turned the country over to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

● Mondale was less than accurate when he suggested the Reagan Administration has not tried diplomacy or political dialogue in respect either to El Salvador or Nicaragua.

Senior State Department officials have been negotiating with the Sandinista government of Nicaragua and have voiced support for the Contadora effort at a Central American peace settlement. And the Administration supported President Jose Napoleon Duarte's dialogue with leftist guerrillas in El Salvador.
