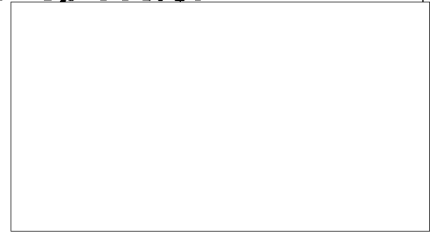




Director of
Central
Intelligence

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National Intelligence Daily

Friday
19 February 1988



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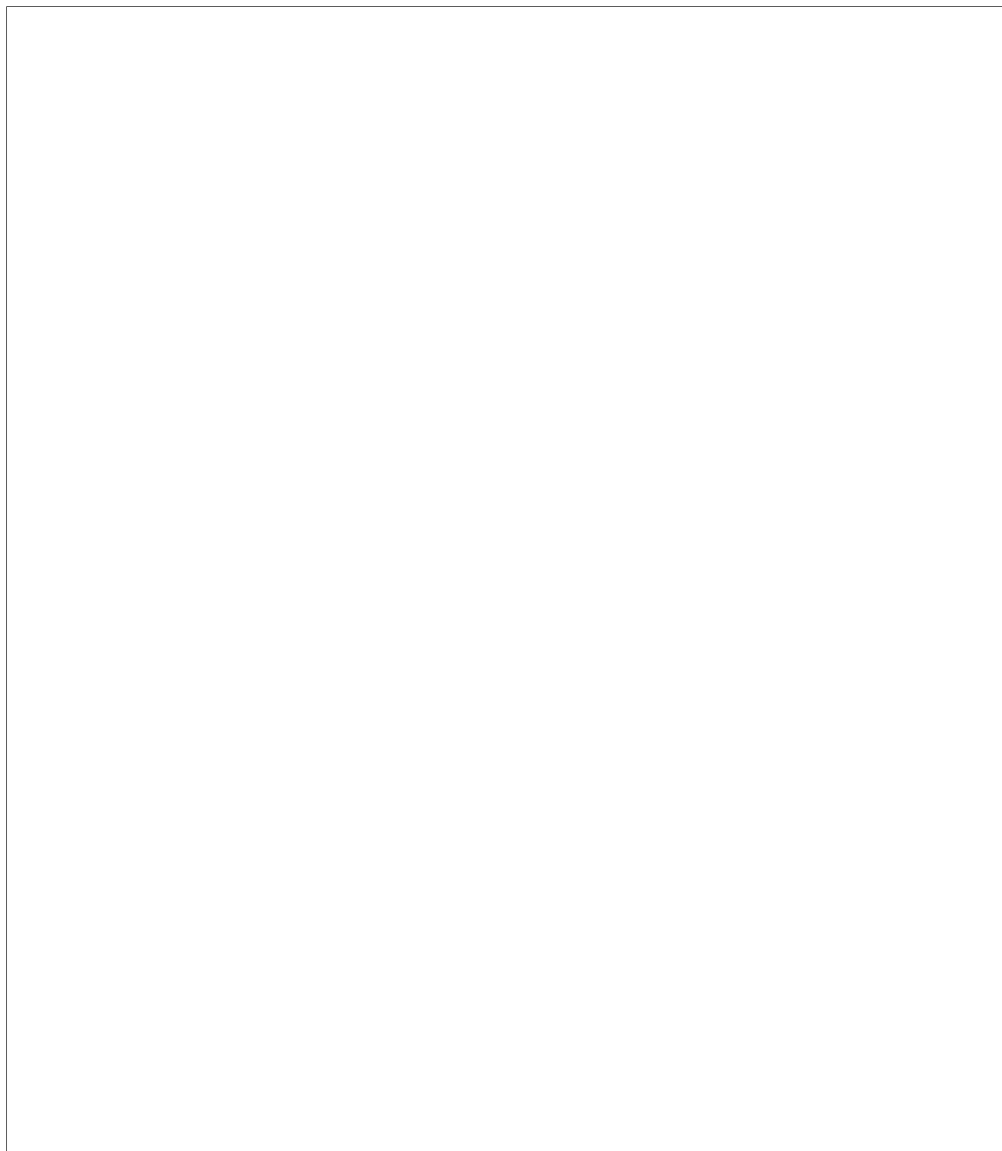
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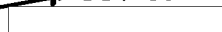


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LEBANON:

Reaction to Abduction of US Marine

Syria and Amal, a Lebanese militia cooperating with Syria, are attempting to locate the new American hostage, but both have limited ability to affect the situation. [Redacted]

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Yesterday, the Islamic Revolutionary Brigade—a name previously associated with Hizballah—claimed responsibility for the abduction of Lieutenant Colonel Higgins and charged him with working with the CIA. Higgins reportedly was kidnaped by Hizballah members based in Tyre, who may have been acting on orders from Iran. [Redacted]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

Amal reportedly has kidnaped four Hizballah members and two members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard to use as bargaining chips to obtain Higgins's release. Amal has begun an intensive search for him in the Tyre region [Redacted]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

Comment: Amal is likely to continue to press hard for Higgins's safe return, both to protect its reputation as the guardian of security in the south and to preserve good relations with UN forces in the region. Despite Amal's dominance in the area in which the kidnaping occurred, Hizballah has made significant gains in southern Lebanon that will severely hamper Amal's efforts. [Redacted]

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No Syrian troops are deployed in the area of the kidnaping, reducing Syria's local leverage on Hizballah; the closest Syrian military presence is a checkpoint at the Awali River, 25 miles (40 kilometers) north of Tyre. Damascus is angry with Hizballah for the kidnapings in West Beirut of American journalist Charles Glass in June and of a West German last month and could register its displeasure over this kidnaping by restricting and harassing Hizballah in the southern suburbs around Beirut and in the Bekaa Valley, where Syria's military presence is strong. Because Higgins disappeared in an area where Syria does not provide security, Damascus probably does not feel embarrassed or obligated to take particularly strong measures on his behalf. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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