

56234

~~TOP SECRET~~

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

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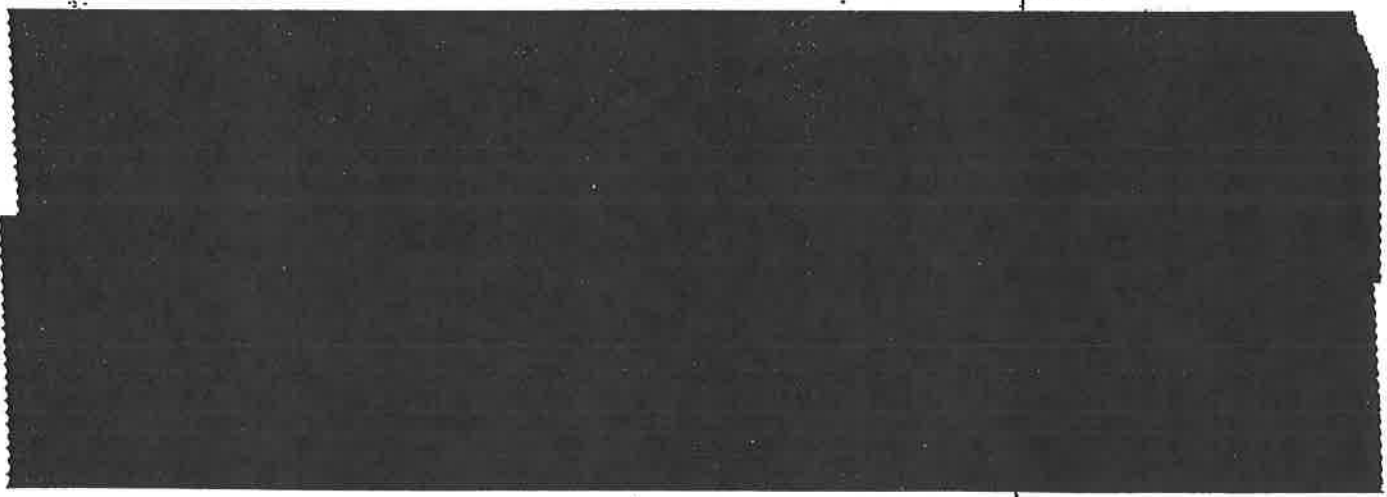
DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

12 January 1984

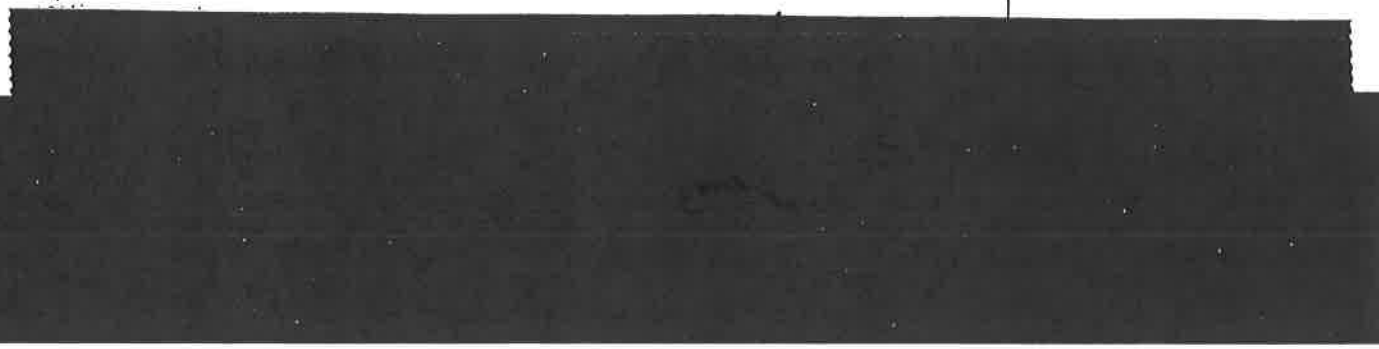
The Terrorist Threat to US Personnel in Beirut

Summary

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BY RW MARA DATE 5-18-10

Who is Involved?

Radical Lebanese Shias and anti-Arafat Palestinian dissidents, based in the Bekaa Valley and southern Beirut, are the primary elements of an emerging terrorist network in Lebanon. Shia extremist groups, such as Islamic Amal, Hizb Allah, the Husayni Suicide Forces, and the Muslim Students Union, are committed to the goal of replacing the Christian-dominated Lebanese Government with an Iran-style Islamic republic. Their members--perhaps totaling as many as 1,000--view the MNF contingents as President Amin Gemayel's principal supporters, and therefore their immediate objective is to force the MNF out of Lebanon.

The Iranian Government encourages and materially supports the terrorist activities of the radical Shia groups.

These Shia and Palestinian groups, as well as their Iranian and Syrian sponsors, almost certainly believe that the bombing at

the Marine compound in October has influenced US public opinion and put pressure on US policymakers to withdraw from Lebanon. They are therefore convinced that an intensifying campaign of terrorist violence against the MNF will advance their objective.

Shia extremists are increasingly willing to sacrifice their lives in attacks on the MNF. Confident that they are serving the will of Allah,

[REDACTED]

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Outlook

The Marine contingent at Beirut airport will continue to be a tempting target for the radical groups. The exposed military layout of the airport is aggravated by its proximity to the sprawling southern slums of Beirut, which are inhabited predominantly by Shias and serve as centers of radical activism. Moreover, the Lebanese Army has failed to cut off the infiltration route of men and weapons from the Bekaa Valley into southern Beirut.

It is nearly impossible for the MNF or the Lebanese Army to establish control over these Shia neighborhoods. Beirut is essentially an armed camp in which nearly every household possesses firearms and often larger weapons. Killing has become commonplace after eight years of intermittent civil war. In this environment, the terrorist-prone Shia and Palestinian groups can operate freely.