THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

[redacted] 25X1

14 June 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH : Chairman, National Intelligence Council

25X1 FROM : [redacted]
National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces

SUBJECT : Observations on the Lebanon War

1. Following two days of heavy air strikes and artillery exchanges, the Israelis launched their invasion of Lebanon on June 6, 1982. The ground assault proceeded northward on multiple axes, supported by amphibious and airborne operations at key points along the coast and inland. [redacted] 25X1
25X1 [redacted] The principal objectives of the attack appear to have been:

-- Reduction of the PLO as a coherent military threat in southern Lebanon, particularly removal of PLO units within artillery range of Israeli settlements.

-- Elimination of the Syrian SAM threat in the Bekaa Valley.

-- Seizure and control of Lebanese territory south of the Beirut-Damascus highway.

2. Measured in these terms, the operation has been a startling success, crowned with an apparently serviceable cease-fire between Israeli and Syrian forces. Whether the cease fire will become effective between PLO and Israeli units may be less important. PLO forces in the Beirut area are probably effectively isolated, hedged in by Israeli forces in the south and Phalangist elements in the north. It would not be surprising if some PLO units cut off in the Israeli rear in the southern part of the country would continue to attempt small harassing actions. The Israelis may soon concentrate their efforts upon neutralization of these units. 25X1

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While the rugged Lebanese terrain is suitable for guerrilla tactics, there appears to be no natural sanctuary to which the PLO in the area can turn for safehaven. They are hemmed on the west by the sea, on the south by Israel, on the east by the Mount Hermon range, and on the north by the main Israeli force. Moreover, if the Sarkis regime is successful in restoring a semblance of independent Lebanese order in the southern part of the country, there is likely to be little indigenous support for guerrilla operations in the countryside. PLO prospects elsewhere will depend heavily upon Syrian support and willingness to underwrite their security under radically altered circumstances.

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3. From a tactical point of view, Israeli forces are in a strong position.

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7. Israeli kills of Syrian aircraft have been dramatic, whether or not the high numbers reported are ultimately confirmed. Press reports indicate that the Israelis have made effective use of their E-2C "Hawkeye" early warning aircraft, of which they are known to have four. The E-2C radar has a range of about 300 miles when the aircraft is flying at 30,000 feet. Advance warning of Syrian air would afford the Israelis an important force multiplication effect over their opponents. Much more needs to be learned about this aspect of the war

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10. A final aspect of the crisis which bears watchfulness is the Soviet role.

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11. [redacted] the possibility of Soviet airborne unit infiltration into Syria should not be ruled out. If the crisis is not soon ended, the Soviets may wish to secure the Damascus airport with their own troops for subsequent airborne force deployment. [redacted]

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12. Once again we have seen the extraordinary alacrity of the Israeli forces in achieving well defined goals. While the nominal cause and trigger for the expedition may have been lost in political hyperbole, there is little doubt that the forces knew exactly what they were about and have again surprised the world with their accomplishments.

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