Approved For Release 2008/02/22 : CIA-RDP88B00443R001404090165-5

VU7

83-4463

12 September 1983

SUBJECT: Lebanon--Participation in Fighting of Syrian, Palestinian, Iranian and Libyan Forces

STAT

[redacted] the Syrians are STAT
supplying the Druze with ammunition, weapons, and
intelligence support. [redacted] the STAT
Syrians have shelled Beirut, and [redacted] STAT
they have encouraged attacks on the MNF. We do not believe,
however, that they are responsible for shelling the Beirut
airport. [redacted] STAT
confirms the active participation of Palestinian forces with
the Druze in the fighting in the Shuf and Alayh districts;
[redacted] also confirm both Libyan and Iranian STAT
participation.

* * * * * * *

The extent of Syrian involvement is not known precisely. Syrian assistance, however, has doubtless prolonged the struggle in the Shuf. Syria's most important contributions have been delivering military supplies, and permitting the movement Palestinian, Iranian, and possibly Libyan fighters into the Shuf and Alayh. Syrian ammunition has probably enabled the Druze artillery to maintain the prodigious rate of fire they have kept up throughout the past week. The Syrians may also be providing supporting artillery fire to the Druze. By supplying the Druze in Alayh, and the Shia in Beirut, with weapons and ammunition, the Syrians hope that in renewed rounds of fighting they and their Lebanese allies can mount sufficient pressure on President Gemayel to force him to declare a government of national unity, or to force the fall of his government.

[redacted] actual participation of Syrian STAT
commando units in the ground fighting, although we have no
confirmation of such involvement. It is unlikely that Syrian
advisers or even a few commandos have had a significant impact on
the course of the fighting so far, however. [redacted] STAT
[redacted] Syrian Defense Minister Tlas confirms publicly, that STAT
the Syrians are prepared to deploy their own troops if the Druze
appear to be on the verge of defeat. The Syrians have
established a checkpoint in Bhamdun, about three miles west of
their previous positions, and a command center the town. Some
Syrian forces may also have entered the contested Shuf and may
now be in the Dayr al Qammar area, which is filled with Christian
refugees.

UNCLASSIFIED

Approved For Release 2008/02/22 : CIA-RDP88B00443R001404090165-5

Approved For Release 2008/02/22 : CIA-RDP88B00443R001404090165-5

[redacted] Libyan fighters moving to reinforce a Druze position, probably in the contested Alayh area. The Libyans have reportedly also provided Druze leader Junblatt with financial help. A small number of Iranian forces with armored vehicles have deployed in Alayh and the Shuf. STAT

Palestinian and, most likely, Libyan and Iranian fighters have supported attacks on Druze targets such as Bhamdun and Suq al Gharb. Although these fighters probably number no more than 1,000 men, they have supplemented Druze manpower, enabling the Druze militia to tie down the Lebanese Army near Beirut and at the same time subdue Christian villages in the eastern Shuf and Alayh districts. A variety of Palestinian factions have participated, including moderate Fatah troops, rejectionist, units and anti-Arafat rebels from the Bekaa Valley.

PLO elements retain weapons caches inside Beirut, which are reportedly intended for distribution to Palestinian and Lebanese Muslim fighters in the event that more fighting breaks out in the city. [redacted] PLO elements outside the city are deploying in support of current Druze objectives in the Shuf, with the ultimate objective of reaching Beirut. Indeed, some rebel PLO vehicles have the slogan, "Forces of the Return to Beirut" painted on them. STAT

Approved For Release 2008/02/22 : CIA-RDP88B00443R001404090165-5