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Central Intelligence Agency



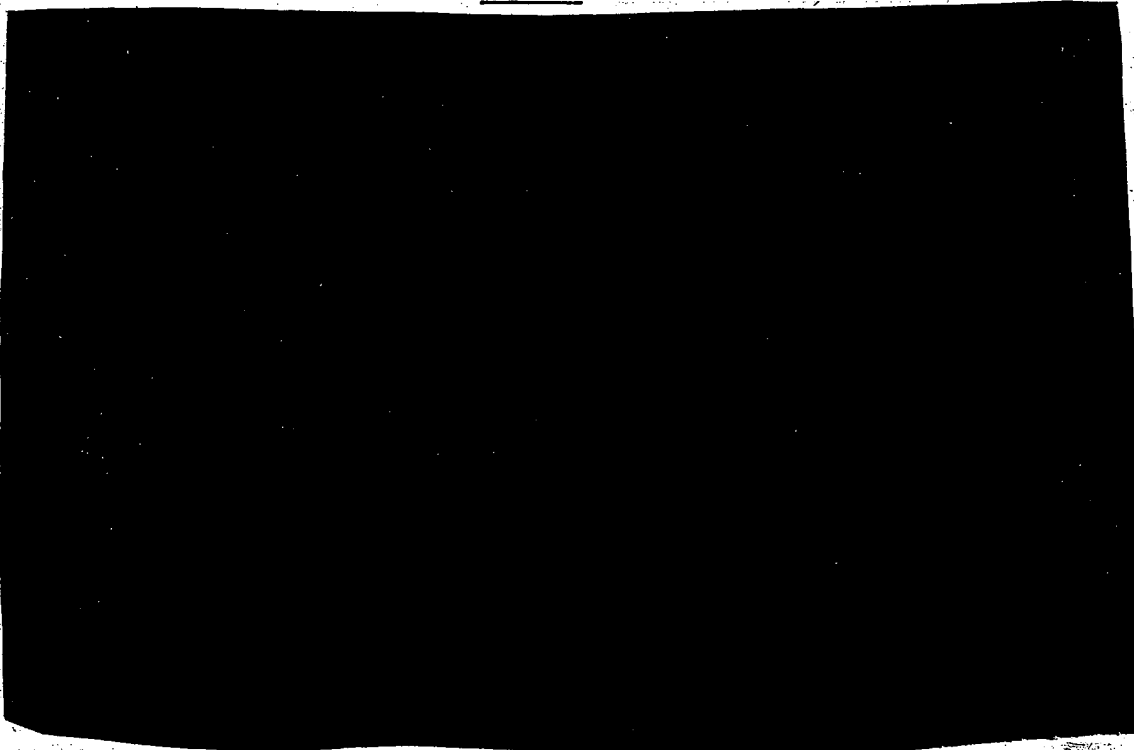
Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

29 October 1987

Israel's Relationship with Amal ~~TOP SECRET~~ b3

SUMMARY



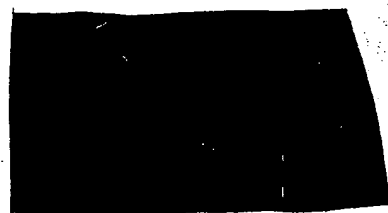
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Information as of 29 October 1987 was used in its preparation. Questions and comments should be addressed to ~~TOP SECRET~~

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Approved for Release
Date JUN 1999

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South Lebanon--with its largely Shia population--is Amal's traditional stronghold. Recent leadership struggles within Amal's southern command have plagued Amal leader Nabih Barri, however, and jeopardizes Amal's power base there. ~~SECRET~~ b3

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Amal's power base also is being diminished by the more militant Iranian-backed Hizballah organization. Hizballah's growth in the south, its affluence, and its visible anti-Israeli activity are challenging Amal's hold on Shias in the region. Amal risks further erosion of its credibility in the south if its Israeli contacts become public knowledge. ~~SECRET~~ b3

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Both parties are enmeshed in other conflicts--Israel with the Iranian-supported Hizballah and Amal with the Palestinians--and want to minimize hostilities with each other. Since Israel's withdrawal to the security zone in 1985, Amal--despite blistering rhetoric--has largely avoided attacking the security zone and has conducted no coordinated, large-scale attacks on Israeli forces, although token attacks continue. Correspondingly, Israel's regular air strikes in Lebanon are targeted against Palestinian or Hizballah positions--not those of Amal. Moreover, during military sweep operations north of the zone, the Israelis have avoided engaging Amal forces, hoping thereby to minimize the negative impact of such a visible Israeli presence on the more moderate Shia in the south.

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Prospects

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Israel's recent moves to strengthen its position, and that of the South Lebanon Army, inflame the population and encourage otherwise passive Shia residents to support Hizballah's attacks. As a result, Amal is weakened and prospects for Israel and Amal to come to a workable and permanent security arrangement in South Lebanon are reduced.

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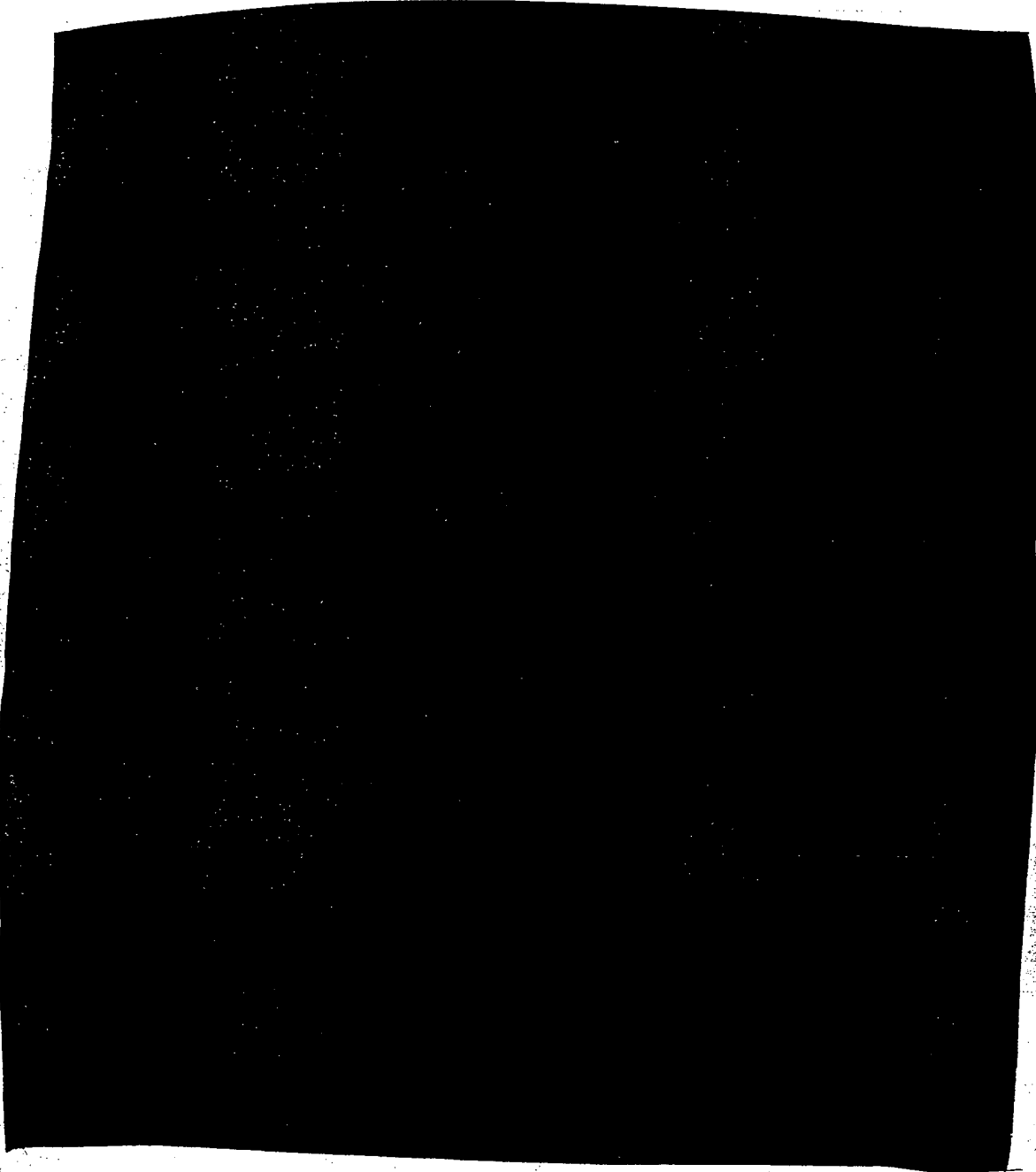
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