

14 May 1973

DCI WSAG BRIEFING

LEBANON AND THE MIDDLE EAST: THE PROSPECTS

LEBANON

- I. The cease-fire appears to be taking hold. Nonetheless, the seeds for renewed fighting remain. In view of pressures on him to avoid a confessional split and to ward off intervention from Syria, President Franjiyah probably will be forced to compromise.
  - A. Should he persist in trying to cripple the guerrillas, however, he could touch off another round of fighting.
  - B. Except as a last resort he would be unlikely to ask for US intervention because of the backlash from the other Arabs.
  - C. The Israelis, however, would not need any invitation if they believed Franjiyah had lost control.
- II. At present, Franjiyah is trying to enlist broad support for tough bargaining with the guerrillas.

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- A. He wants to tip the balance of power much more decisively in the government's favor than was the case before the fighting.
1. At a minimum, he wants all but light weapons removed from Palestinian camps around Beirut and freedom for the Lebanese police to inspect and, if necessary, control the camps.
  2. In this, Franjiyah has the support of the Christian community and the army. An important segment of the Muslim community does not support this hard a line, however. Too much pressure from Franjiyah could provoke a confessional split and lead to civil strife.
- B. The army performed effectively last week, but it probably cannot impose a solution on the fedayeen.

III. The guerrillas are on the defensive. Despite some posturing, they are aware that they cannot return to the precarious situation before the fighting, which gave them considerable freedom of action.

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- A. The fedayeen probably will work toward a co-existence formula which would leave them in control of the Palestinian camps and would allow some freedom in the countryside.
  - B. The considerable sympathy for the guerrillas which exists in the Muslim community, the threat of Syrian intervention, and pressure from the business community for a resumption of commercial activity favor compromise.
  - C. Loss of their Jordan base in 1970 severely narrowed the guerrillas' options against Israel, and they are intent on preserving a measure of operational capability in Lebanon. They could be forced to rely even more on foreign terrorism if Franjiah significantly clips their wings.
- IV. Other Arab states, particularly Egypt, played a useful role in mediating the cease-fire and deterring Syria. They are likely, however, to argue against the imposition of tighter controls on the guerrillas.
- A. Damascus has allowed modest infiltration of

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New Page 4 WSAG Middle East Briefing

fedayeen--but no regular forces--into Lebanon.

B. A harsh settlement, however, might prompt the Syrians to allow more substantial infiltration. They would hope thereby to prevent any exporting of the problem to Syria.

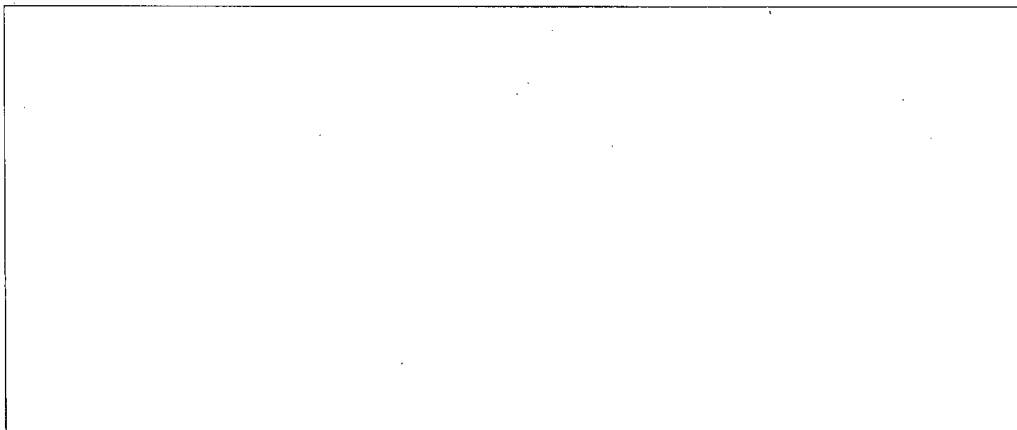
1. Damascus' fear of Israeli intervention makes the commitment of regular troops problematical.

C. For their part, the Israelis seem disinclined to meddle unless the Syrian army becomes involved or unless massive infiltration of fedayeen threatens Israel.

V. The Soviets do not appear to have played a major role, although there are indications they may have restrained all the parties.

MIDDLE EAST PROSPECTS

VI.

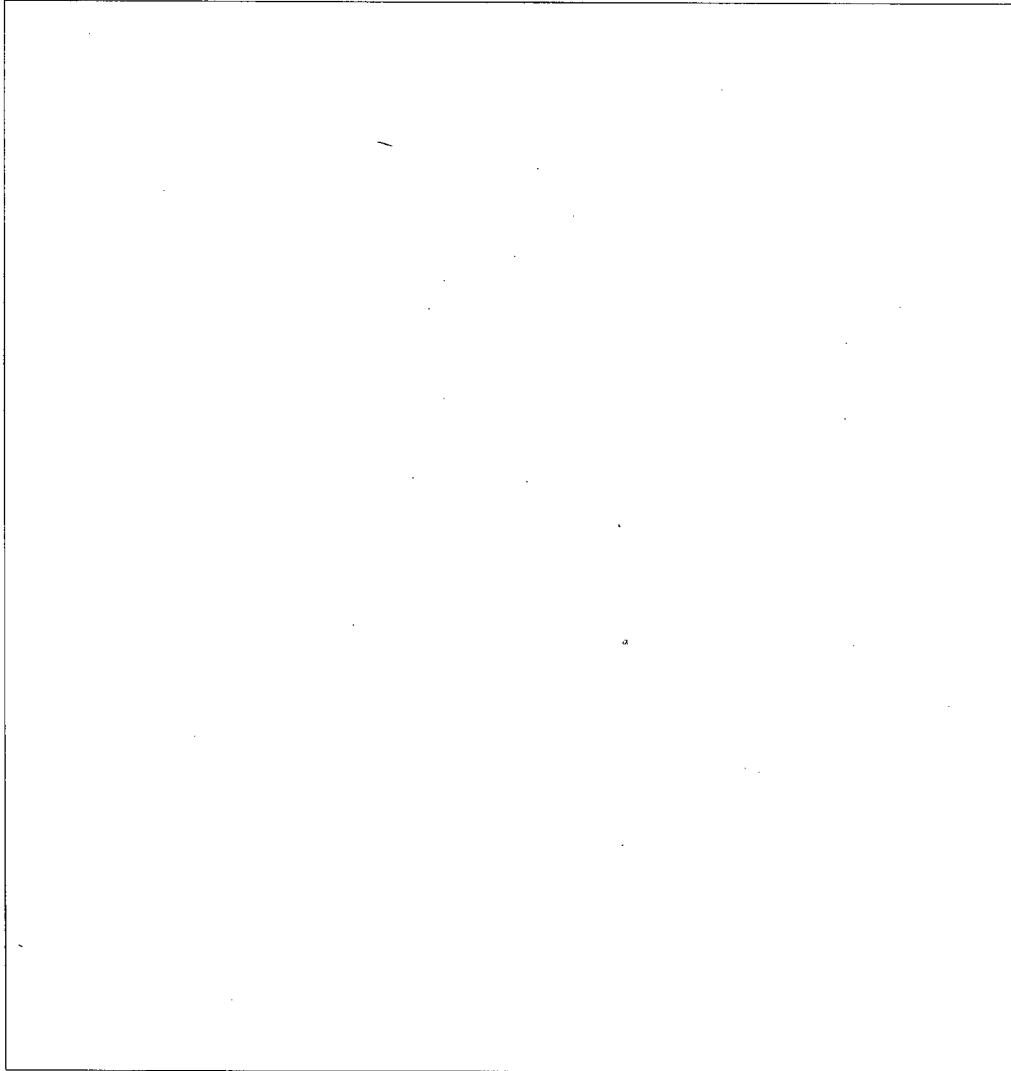


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New Page 5 WSAG Middle East Briefing



VII.

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VIII. These preparations are as necessary for psychological as for military purposes. President Sadat hopes to arouse US concern and thereby lead the US to press Israel for concessions.

A. Sadat probably does not want to risk war at this juncture, and he undoubtedly hopes that his psychological gambits will obviate the need for it;

even if they fail to arouse us, they may help his Arab image temporarily.

- B. He further hopes that the UN session on the Middle East (late May or early June) or the US-Soviet summit, or both, will produce diplomatic pressure on Israel.
  - C. In the meantime, his military preparations serve to create tensions that lend urgency to his diplomacy.
- IX. Sadat has been under pressure to avoid hostilities.
- A. The Soviets--worried not only about the effect of another Arab defeat on their position in the Middle East, but also about the effect of a new crisis on detente with the US--have been advising against precipitate action.
  - B. King Faysal, concerned lest he be pulled into openly anti-US actions, has counseled restraint. This apparently was the reason behind his visit to Cairo this past weekend.

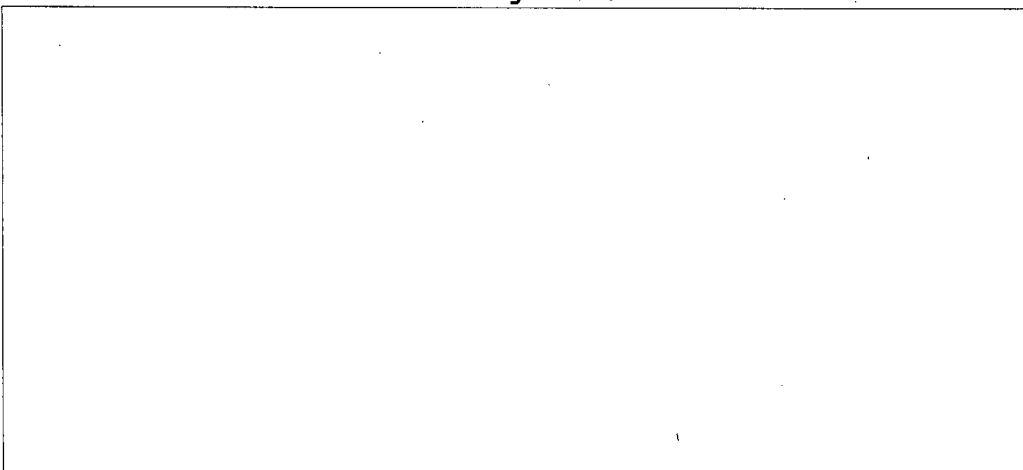
- X. We doubt that Egypt will deliberately initiate military action, at least until after the conclusion of the US-Soviet summit, even though the temptation will be strong to do something that would focus attention on the problem as the summit draws near.
- A. The period from mid-June on will be a particularly dangerous one if Sadat is not able to argue convincingly, from the summit results or from other developments, that he is making progress.
- B. The military preparations--and the pressures for militancy from Qadhafi--could develop a momentum of their own even if Sadat calculated that he could draw back at the last moment. He could also talk himself into believing that the Israeli response would be manageable.
- XI. If Egypt does open hostilities, its capabilities will be improved by the acquisition of approximately 30 Libyan Mirage 5 aircraft.
- A. Unlike other aircraft in the Egyptian inventory, the mirage can fly at the low altitudes required to penetrate Israeli de-

fenses and still reach its target with a sizable payload.

B. Egyptian pilots have been training on Mirages for over a year and appear capable of flying them in combat.

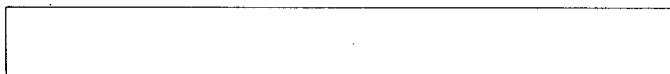
XII. Israeli officials are playing Egyptian threats of renewed hostilities in low key, while at the same time keeping at the ready.

A. Mrs. Meir has said that it would not be logical for Egypt to renew the fight and be defeated; but Israel must be prepared for Sadat to do the "illogical."



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XIII. The Israeli attitudes stem in part from a desire to avoid Big Power intervention and the fear that a "dangerous" situation might ultimately lead to an imposed settlement--a development



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they have always felt would be detrimental to Israel's security.

A. The Israelis believe that Sadat's moves are designed less for fighting than to create a climate of concern that would help Egypt get better terms. The Israelis also say they believe that much of Sadat's activity is for domestic effect.

XIV. At the same time, Israel continues to demonstrate to the Arabs its military power (e.g., the recent Independence Day parade and fly-by in Jerusalem, and current maneuvers of the crack Golani brigade on the Golan Heights).

A. Israeli officials have repeatedly warned publicly that the Arabs would be dealt another devastating military defeat.

B. Israel's traditional preoccupation with the advantages of surprise in warfare suggests that it will--if the Arabs make moves that Israel feels threaten its security--undertake pre-emptive action.

C. 

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D. The Israelis would also seek to destroy the Libyan Mirages before they could be used against them.

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E.

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F. While Egypt is viewed as the principal enemy, Defense Minister Dayan has also warned Syria. He indicated that Israel would regard the move of regular Syrian forces into southern Lebanon as a threat to Israeli security.

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