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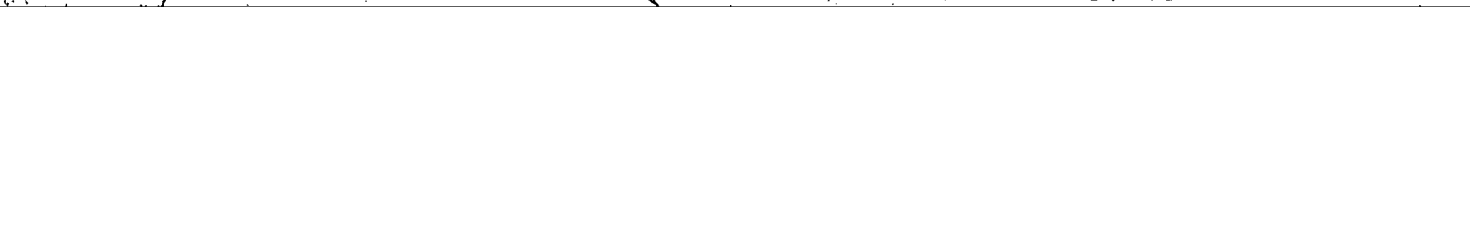
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2755

INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE 0838

RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 0782

RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 1126

RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE 0985

RUEHJI/AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE 0825

RUEHRH/USELO RIYADH IMMEDIATE 0726

RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 1055

RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

BT

~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ BEIRUT 09718

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PINS, MOPS, LE

SUBJECT: LAF IN EAST BEIRUT

REF: BEIRUT 9698

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT)

2. THE LAF'S 5TH BRIGADE IS NOW DEPLOYED IN EAST BEIRUT, MANNING CHECKPOINTS AND OPERATING PATROLS. THE ARMY PRESENCE IS HIGHLY VISIBLE IN ALMOST ALL

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AREAS AFTER HAVING DWINDLED ALMOST TO THE VANISHING POINT IN RECENT MONTHS. (REPORTING IN DAO CHANNELLS PROVIDES DETAILS ON LAF POSITIONS IN EAST BEIRUT.)

3. THE RETURN OF THE ARMY TO EAST BEIRUT CAME AT THE INSISTENCE OF PRIME MINISTER AL-WAZZAN, MOTIVATED BY THE NEED TO SHOW AT LEAST THE SEMBLANCE OF EVEN-HANDED TREATMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT IN BOTH EAST AND WEST BEIRUT. THUS FAR, THE DEPLOYMENT HAS BEEN LARGELY A RESTAGING OF THE LAF OPERATION IN EAST BEIRUT LAST FEBRUARY: CHECKPOINTS AND PATROLS, BUT ~~NO MEASURES THAT MATERIALLY AFFECT THE CAPABILITIES OF THE PHALANGE-DOMINATED LEBANESE FORCES. THUS FAR, FOR EXAMPLE, THE ARMY HAS NOT MOVED TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE LF HEADQUARTERS IN KARANTINA OR LF ARTILLERY BATTERIES IN THE GREATER BEIRUT AREA.~~

6. ALTHOUGH THE REDEPLOYMENT MAY HAVE SOME COSMETIC BENEFIT, IT IS NOT LIKELY TO HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON MUSLIM ATTITUDES UNLESS THE LAF TAKES ACTIONS THAT DEMONSTRATE THAT GOVERNMENT CONTROL IN EAST BEIRUT IS A FACT, NOT JUST AN APPEARANCE. MEDIA TREATMENT INDICATES THIS IS THE CASE. LEFTIST AS-SAFIR, FOR EXAMPLE, GIVES MINIMAL COVERAGE TO THE OPERATION, NOTING IN A SUB-HEADLINE ONLY THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY HAS "INCREASED PATROLS" IN EAST BEIRUT.
DILLON

END OF MESSAGE

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