

21 June 83

Intelligence Briefing for NSC Meeting on Middle East

21 June 1983

Israel

- Domestic pressure for partial withdrawal - Israeli casualties up over 500 - almost at Vietnam level on proportion basis - Begin down in polls somewhat. Labor calling for phased but complete unilateral withdrawal. Unlikely Begin would withdraw unilaterally prior to visit here. Partial withdrawal not likely to significantly reduce casualties - most from Shias in south.

- Partial withdrawal would be critical test of Gemayel's ability to control Lebanon - likely to review factional fighting among Druze and Christians - Lebanon doesn't want partial withdrawal without assurances that it will lead to full withdrawal and that area vacated can be policed by Lebanese army and multinational force.

PLO

- Israeli withdrawal would encourage PLO - claim credit for guerrilla activity and expand presence in north and increase attacks on Israeli-PLO and Syrians increase aid to Druze and infiltration thru Shrif (sp?) into Israeli security zone.

Syria

- Syria will see Israeli withdrawal as triumph for their hard line - perception in Arab world that Israelis have pulled back and Assad will be portrayed as in the ascendency.

- We see Assad as firmly against Lebanon-Israel agreement. Encouraged by support of Soviets

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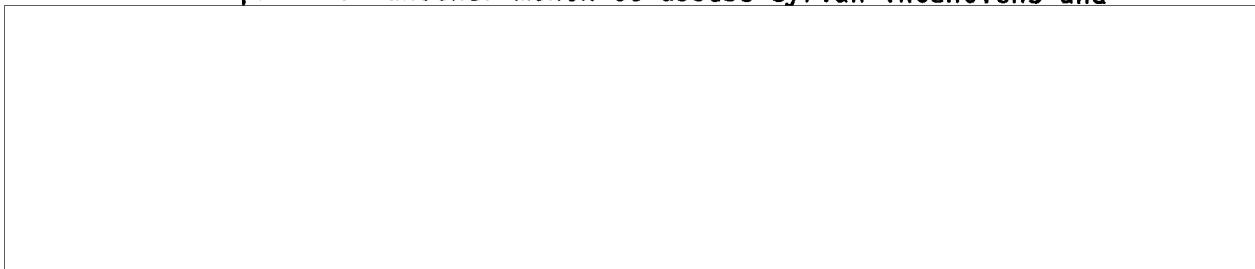
Soviets

- Will go all out to frustrate any US-sponsored agreement for Middle East peace - maintain military support to Syria even in face of attack by Israelis - will try to avert hostilities while keeping tensions high - attempting to bring radical forces in area together - supporting unity within PLO, therefore Arafat, and trying to bring about rapprochement between Syria and Iraq - and are working for better Syrian-Jordanian relations - but there are limits to what they can accomplish in this. We see the Soviets as more determined than ever to get piece of action in Middle East peace process.

SECRET

In Sum:

- Israelis unlikely to withdraw before Begin visit.
- This provides another month to assess Syrian intentions and



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