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Middle East Situation Report #40  
(as of 1100 EST, 21 February 1984)

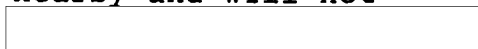
LEBANON/SYRIA

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According to press reports, Israel Defense Force units conducted a reconnaissance operation yesterday and today in the Iqlim al-Kharrub area, between the Awwali River and Damur River, but have withdrawn back across the Awwali.

- The action, as in the past, was to remind the warring factions that Israeli forces are nearby and will not tolerate renewed fighting there.



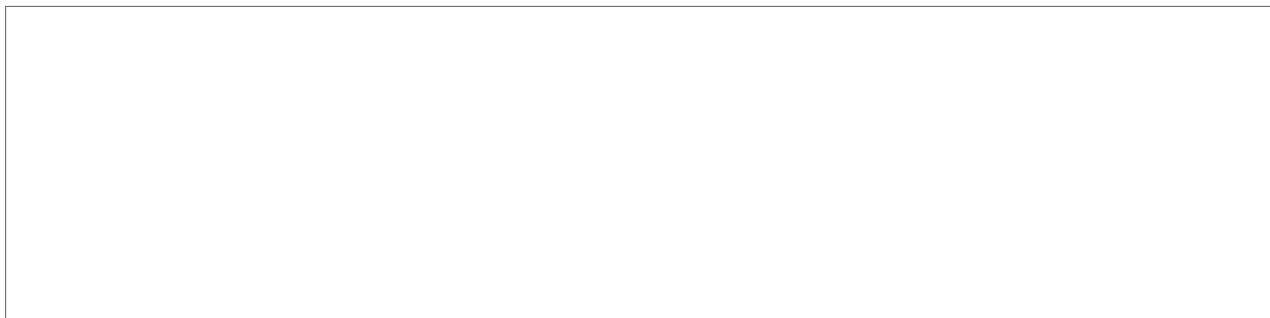
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According to press reports, Saudi envoy Rafiq Hariri presented President Gemayel a "four-point" plan yesterday that included:

- Canceling the 17 May agreement in return for freezing the security situation.
- Dealing "in different ways" with the Israeli occupation and the Syrian military presence in Lebanon.
- Referring the question of the Syrian military presence in Lebanon to the Arab League.
- Resuming the national dialogue in Geneva and forming a government of national unity.



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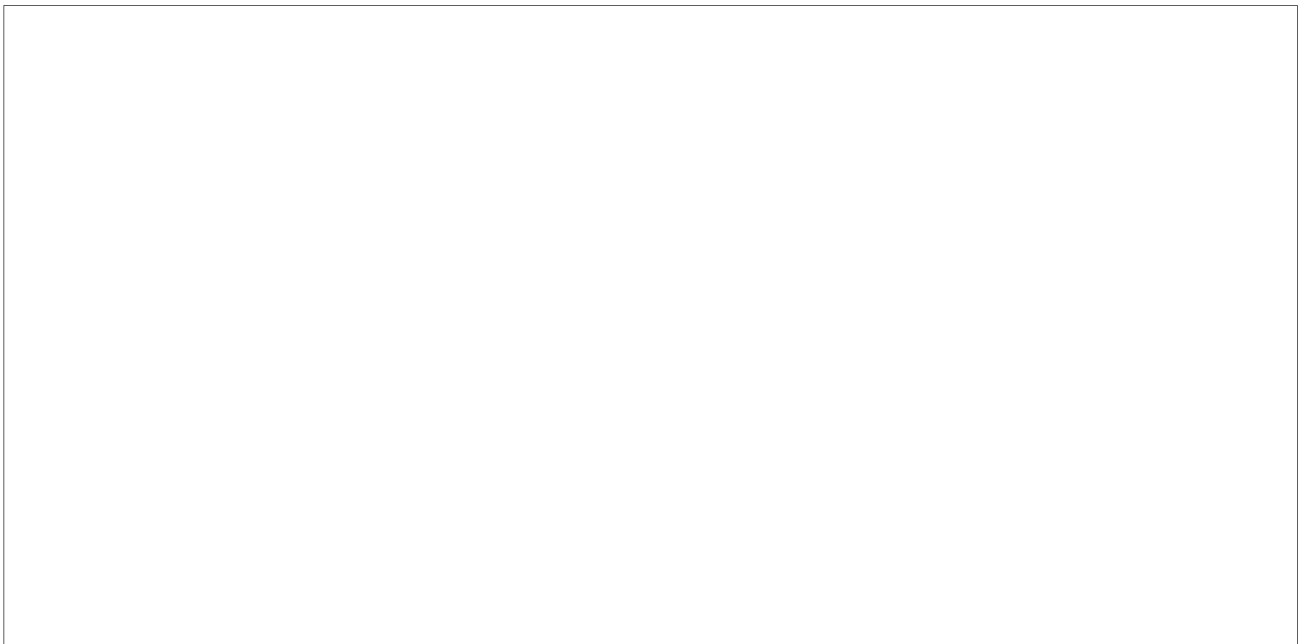
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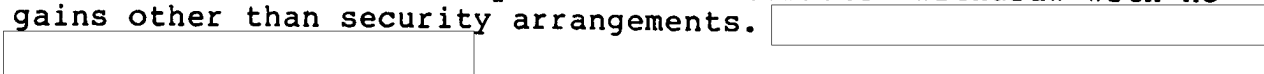
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Lebanese Foreign Minister Salim told Ambassador Bartholomew on Sunday that Saudi mediator Hariri believes Syrian conditions have escalated because of changes on the ground. Hariri believes the Syrians now will not accept any references implying an equivalence between Syria and Israel. Nevertheless, the Saudis remain optimistic that whatever the Syrians say publicly, they will pull out of Lebanon provided the Israelis withdraw with no gains other than security arrangements.

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Syria's strategy appears to be to see how much more they can squeeze out of Gemayel.

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The Sunni commander of the LAF's 3rd Brigade has said his officers and men support him in his resolve to remain loyal to the government and that he foresees few desertions regardless of circumstances.

-- The continued cohesion of the 3rd Brigade along the Green Line dividing East and West Beirut supports its commanders claims and suggests that poor leadership has been a major factor in the steady deterioration of the Lebanese Army.

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PERSIAN GULF

The Saudi Consul General, who was kidnapped in Beirut about a month ago, was released Saturday in Lebanon, [redacted]

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Defense Ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council complete a two-day meeting in Qatar today. [redacted]

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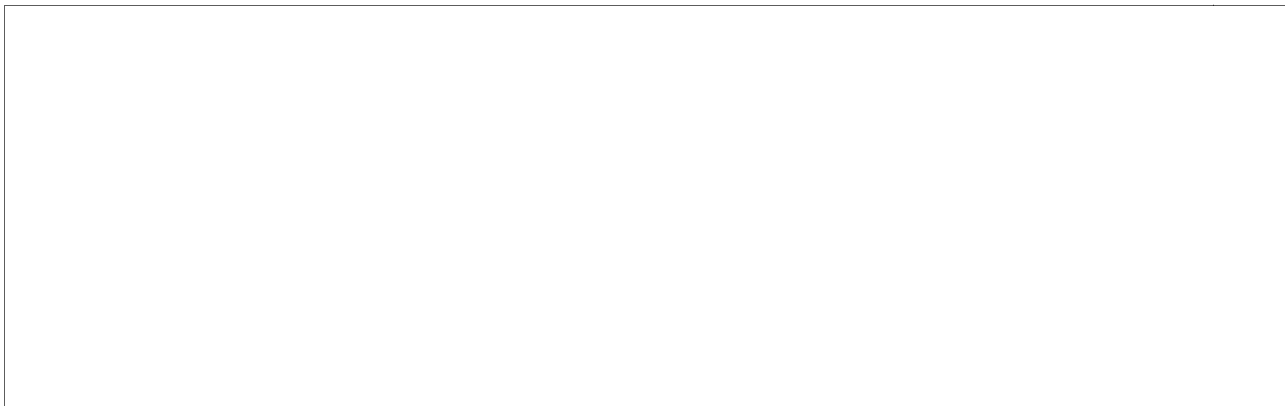
-- We believe contingency planning for possible Iranian attempts to block Strait of Hormuz was on the agenda.



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IRAN-IRAQ WAR

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Iran and Iraq continue to seek political advantage over the possible sending of another UN mission to look into prospects for ending their conflict. Iran has made a last minute refusal to receive a UN Secretariat fact finding mission, claiming problems with the terms of reference for the mission. [redacted]

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-- Tehran may simply have not wanted UN officials on hand while the current offensive [redacted] was underway. [redacted]

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