

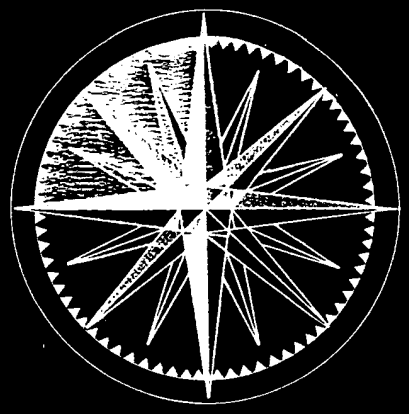
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6 March 1964

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WEEKLY SUMMARY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

NO FOREIGN DISSEM

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44-228525/2

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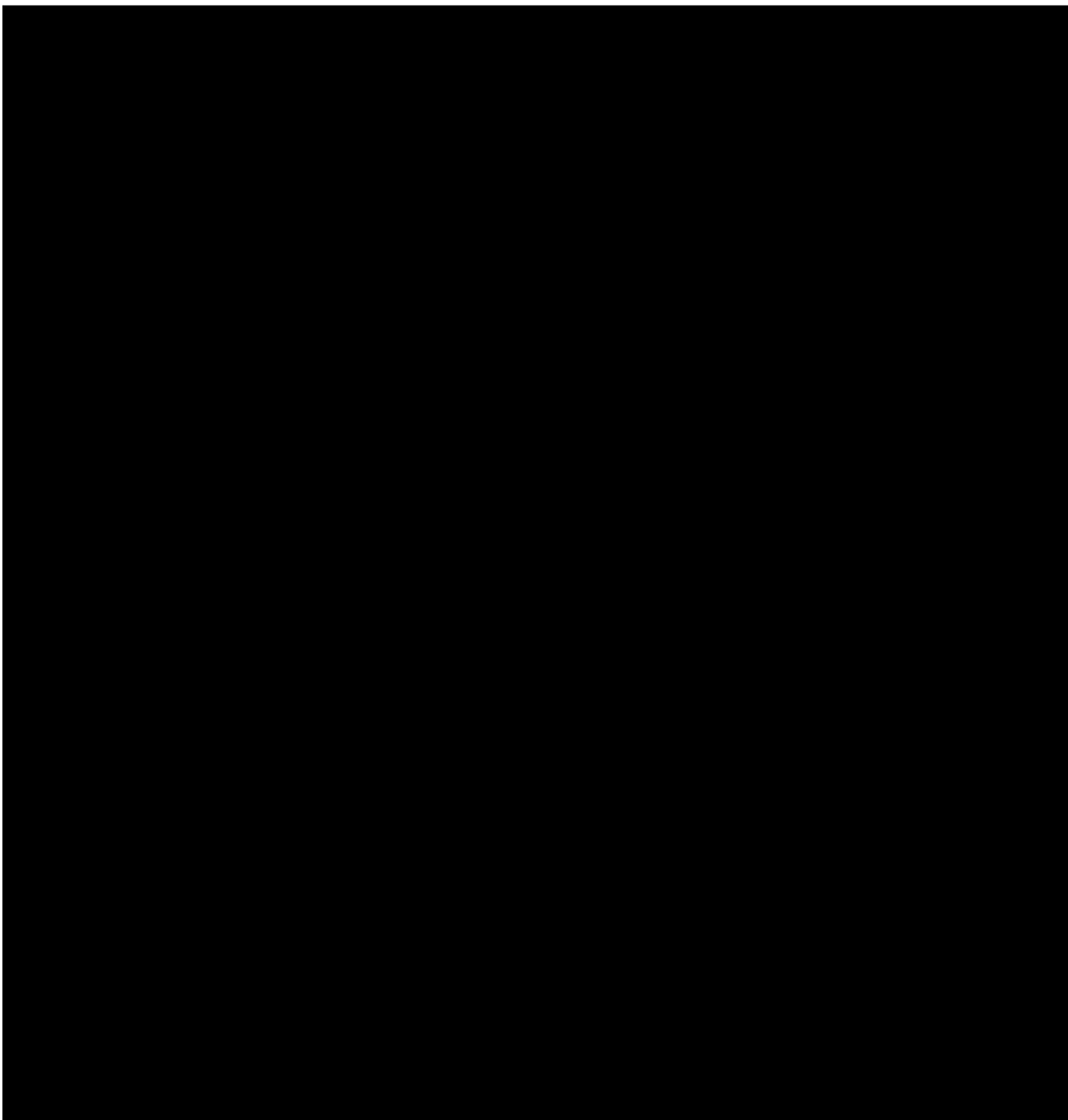
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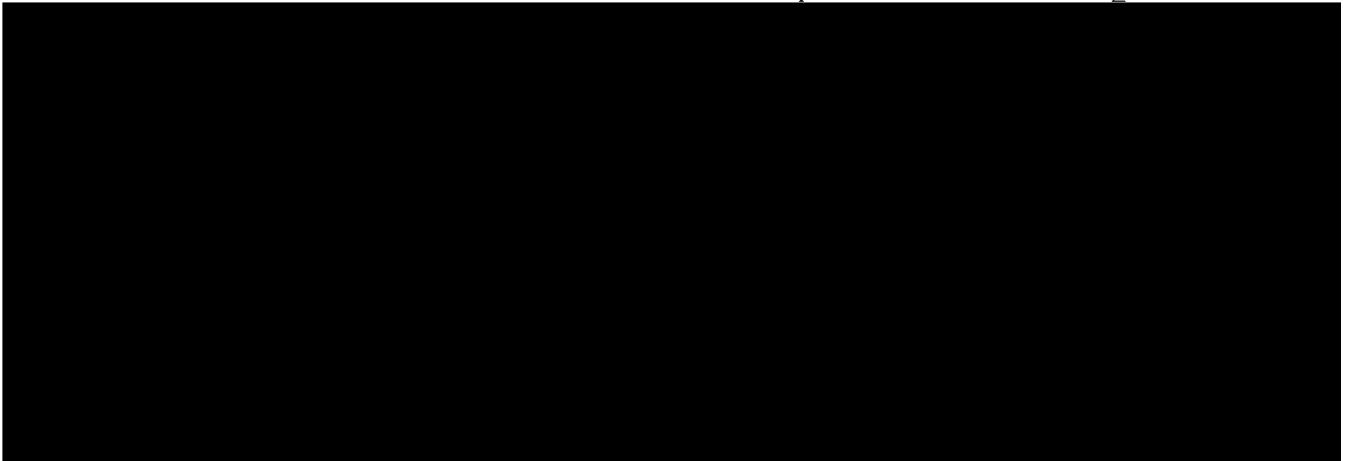
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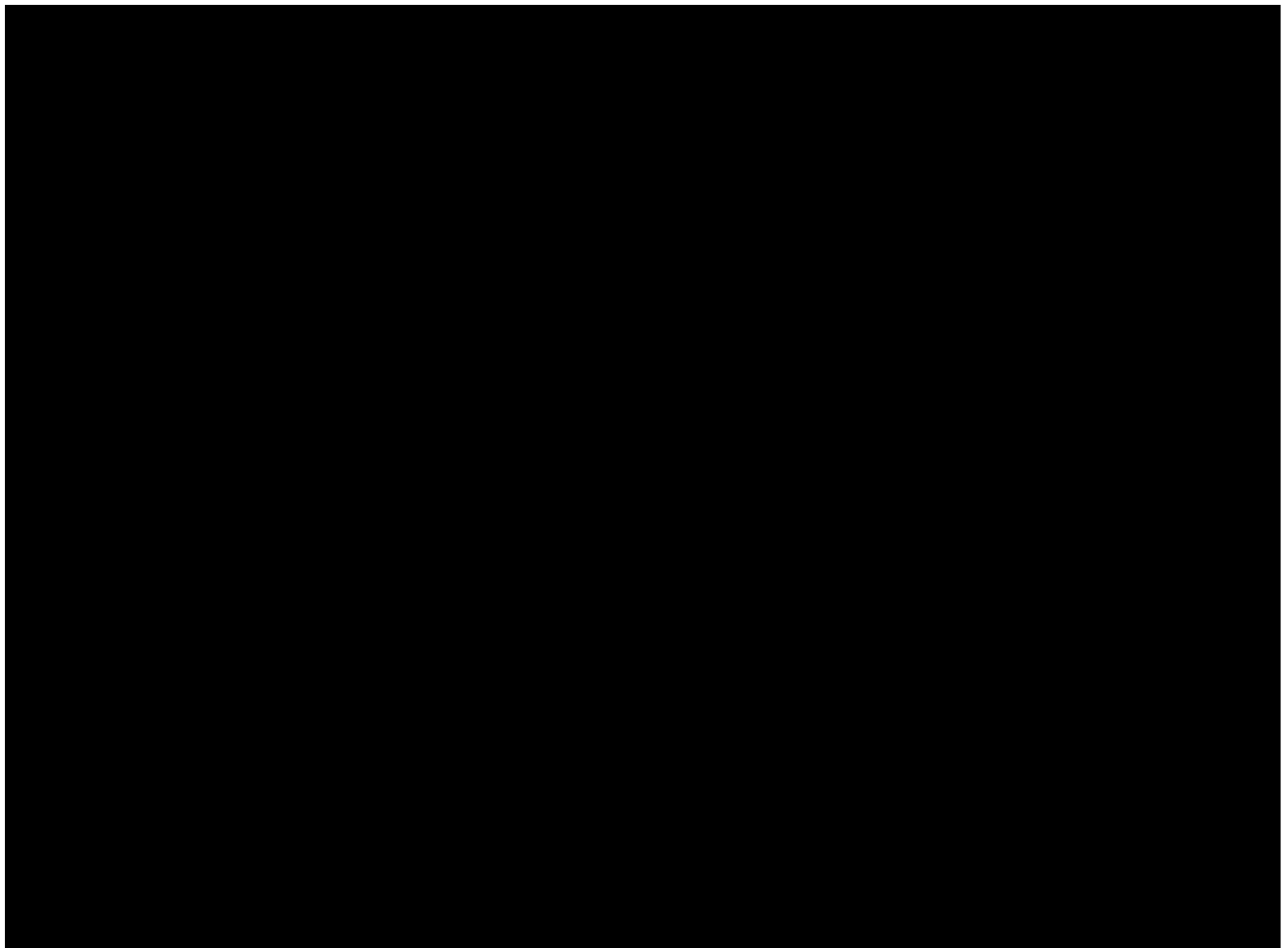
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LEBANON AGAIN FACES PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION ISSUE

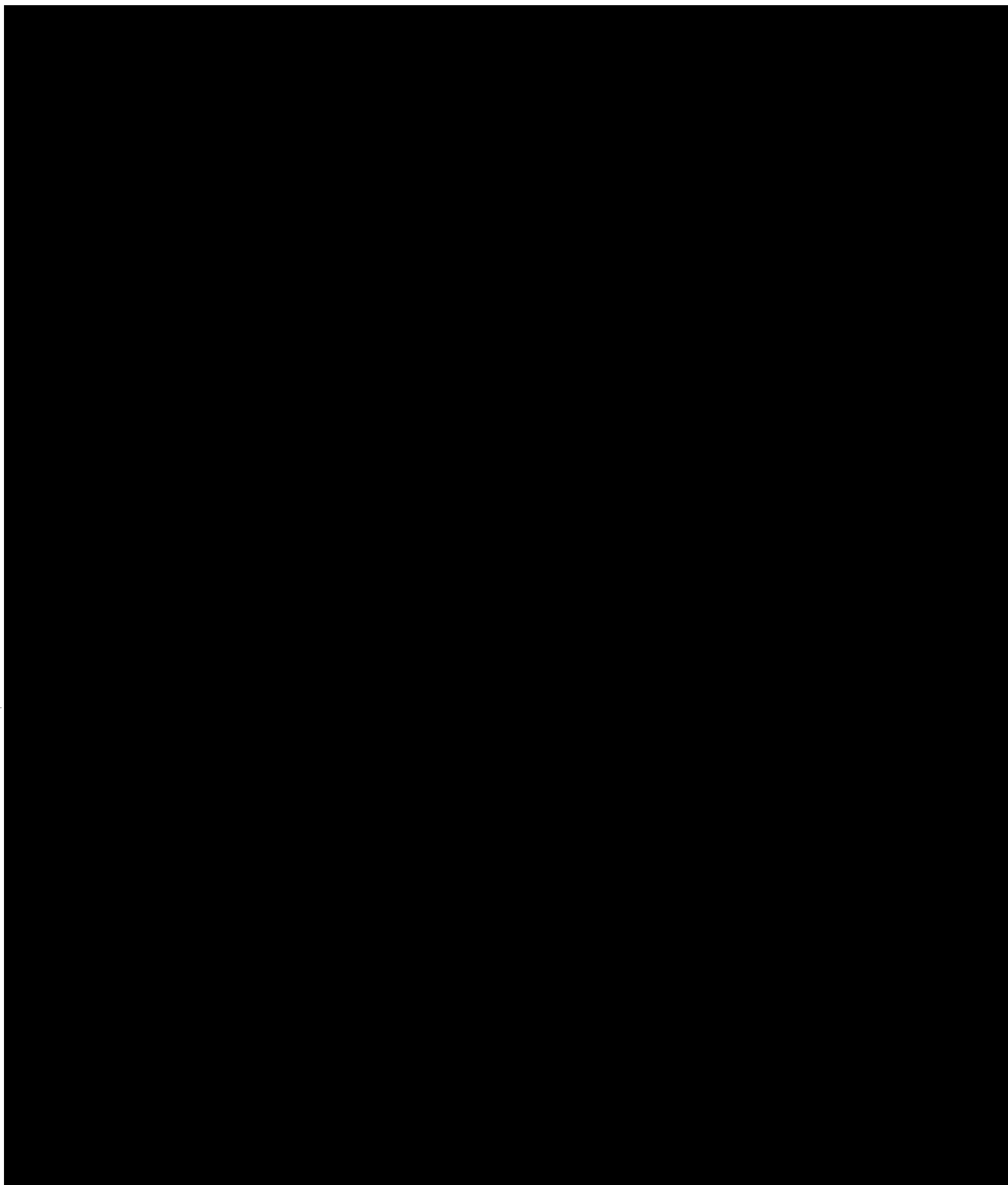
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Many Lebanese regard President Shihab as the only leader who can save them from the extremes of factionalism that led to the 1958 civil war, but the constitution forbids a second presidential term.



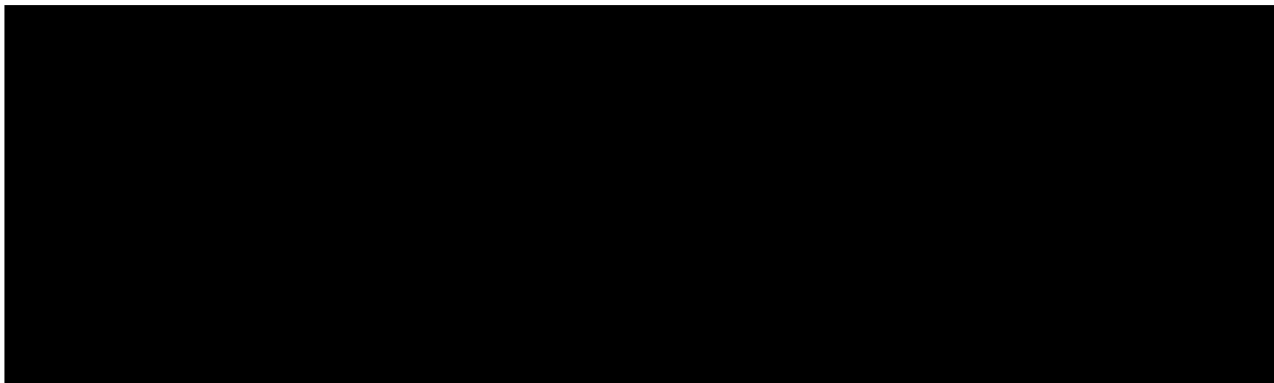
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Asia-Africa

LEBANON AGAIN FACES PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION ISSUE

After over five years of relative calm, Lebanon is approaching another presidential election which could revive the religious and political factionalism that led to the civil war of 1958. The paramount issue is whether President Shihab, the moderate Maronite Christian whose election terminated the 1958 crisis, will seek re-election. As it now stands, the constitution prohibits a second term for the president, but many Lebanese believe that Shihab is the only leader who can save the country from another period of political violence.

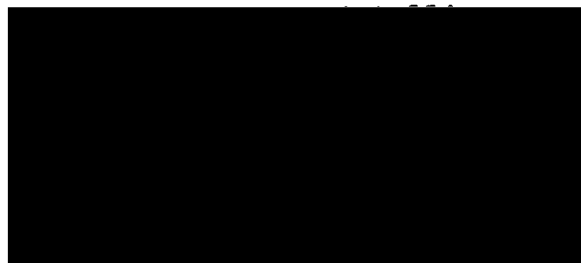
Shihab so far has appeared reluctant to succeed himself. However, the strong sentiment favoring a second term for him may induce him to change his mind--presumably after the constitution has been changed. New parliamentary elections, to be held from 5 April through 3 May, may be followed by some definitive announcement by Shihab regarding his intentions.

The new parliament will elect the president, probably in August. According to a 21-year-old unwritten agreement between leaders of the Muslim and Christian communities, the president is a Maronite and

the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, while other top state offices are distributed among the less important religious groups.

Ex-President Shamun's attempt to succeed himself started the troubles of 1958. An effort by Shihab to follow suit would be opposed by some elements, including Shamun and Maronite Patriarch Maushi, both of whom have long been at odds with him. Shihab's popularity among both Muslims and Christians generally, however, probably would prevent sentiment against him from approaching the intensity of that against Shamun in 1958. Moreover, the UAR, which at that time was deeply involved in supporting Muslim opposition to Shamun, is unlikely to intervene against Shihab.

The army also strongly supports Shihab, who was its commander before he became president.



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