



Directorate of Intelligence

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**Near East and
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Some articles are preliminary views of a subject or speculative, but the contents normally will be coordinated as appropriate with other offices within CIA. Occasionally an article will represent the views of a single analyst; these items will be designated as noncoordinated views. Comments may be directed to the authors, whose phone numbers are listed. [redacted]

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Articles

Lebanon:
Radical Shias and the Beirut Bombing [redacted]

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Nabih Berri, leader of Lebanon's mainline Shias, told Ambassador Dillon last week that he does not believe the Islamic Struggle Organization—which claimed responsibility for last week's bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut—exists as a distinct group in Lebanon. Berri implied that Islamic Struggle is simply a name of convenience adopted by extremists to confuse the authorities. [redacted]

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The name has been used frequently in recent years by pro-Iranian Shia radicals, especially in the Gulf, and was used previously in Lebanon by those claiming responsibility for the bombing of the French Embassy in May 1982 and attacks on the multinational peace-keeping force in March and April of this year. It has not been heard of at other times. [redacted]

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There is mounting circumstantial evidence that the Embassy bombing was the work of pro-Iranian Lebanese Shias, but there is no hard evidence directly linking the act to Tehran. The bombing could have been instigated by Iran's intelligence agent in Beirut without the knowledge of his superiors. In fact, the Iranian Ambassador in Damascus—who is formally responsible for Iranian activities in Lebanon—complained [redacted] about his lack of control over operations in Lebanon. The Ambassador complained that the sizable budget allotted to the intelligence agent in the Iranian Embassy in Beirut allowed him to undertake independently a program of operations. [redacted]

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[redacted] the agent began operating in Beirut by at least mid-February after the position had remained vacant for about eight months. One week before the Embassy bombing, the agent [redacted]

[redacted]

reported [redacted] that he had formed a reliable information gathering network. If this agent was involved in the Embassy bombing, it is probable that his accomplices were radical Lebanese Shias. The possibility that pro-Syrian or Palestinian groups were involved, however, cannot be ruled out. [redacted]

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Radical Shia Groups

There are several Shia groups known to have close ties with Iran. Most are breakaway factions of the mainline Shia Amal organization. The best known of the breakaway factions is Amal of Islam, located in Balabakk, under the command of Husayn Musawi. The group, which claims 300 to 400 followers, works closely with Iranian Revolutionary Guards stationed in the Bekaa and also cooperates with Syria, whose troops occupy the region [redacted]

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Musawi's followers participated with Iranian Revolutionary Guards in attacks against Lebanese Army patrols in November 1982 and early March 1983. Musawi's people also embarrassed the government of Amin Gemayel by seizing the Balabakk city hall last November on Lebanese Independence Day. [redacted]

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Another radical group, with probably no more than several score members, is located in Beirut's southern suburbs. [redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Several other obscure pro-Khomeini Shia groups operate in Lebanon. [Redacted] one group, the Husayn Suicide Squad, threatened in February 1983 to attack the Jordanian and Saudi Embassies in Beirut. The Jordanian military attache in Beirut, who received the threat, informed Lebanese intelligence that he believed the group's leader was an Iranian cleric residing in Lebanon and holding diplomatic status. [Redacted]

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Another group is the Hizb Allah (Party of God). [Redacted] Iran's Ambassador in Damascus reported to Tehran that Hizb Allah has close ties with the Revolutionary Guards, under whose supervision they have carried out operations against Israeli forces in Lebanon. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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