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136446 REPORT	RE OPTIONS (P. 15-16) MISSING	19	10/15/1985	B1
	PAR 9/15/2017 *M441/1*			
136448 REPORT	RE REACTION	4	10/21/1985	B1
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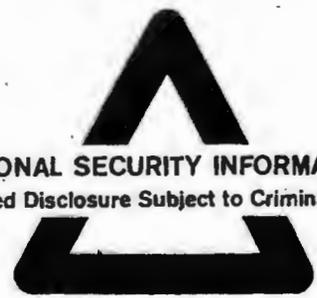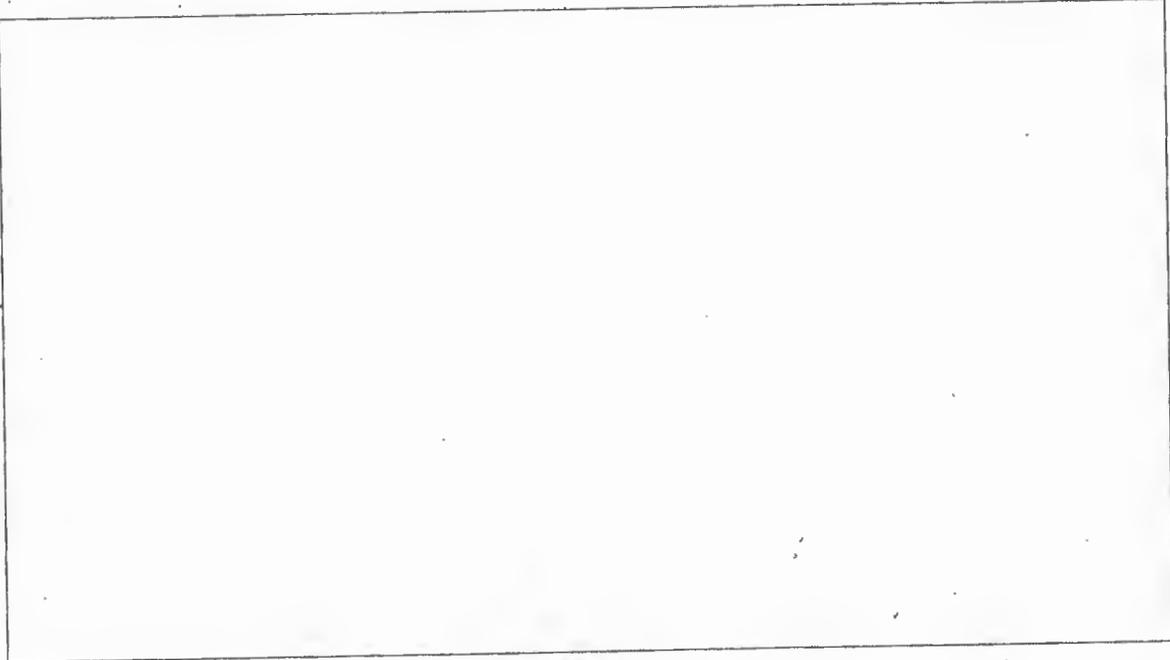
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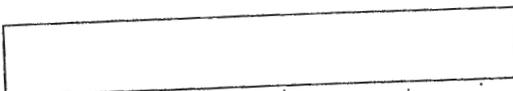
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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

15 October 1985

Moscow's Hostage Crisis: Possible Soviet Options

Summary

Moscow's response thus far to its hostage crisis has been
relatively low-key. The Soviets have launched widespread
diplomatic initiatives, but have refrained from public threats or
any detectable military reaction. As long as the Soviets place a
premium on regaining the hostages alive, their best option
overall would appear to be the present course.

The Soviets nonetheless are almost certainly examining their
military options, either to rescue the hostages or retaliate
against the perpetrators. A rescue operation involving a small,
elite KGB or Spetsnaz force--possibly with the assistance of
Syrian commandos--appears to be Moscow's best military course of
action if good supporting intelligence were available. While
massive or even "surgical" air strikes on a Lebanese city would
have negative political repercussions on the Soviet position in
the Arab world, such retaliation could be dealt by Soviet bombers
flying directly from the USSR, tactical aircraft staging from
Syrian airfields, or by naval bombardment from off Lebanon's
coast. All of Moscow's military options presuppose at least some
Syrian acquiescence (or even direct support); if this were
lacking, the likelihood of success of a Soviet rescue mission, in
particular, would be even more questionable.

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This memorandum was prepared by   Office of Soviet
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Eastern and South Asian Analysis, and by
                                                          SOVA.
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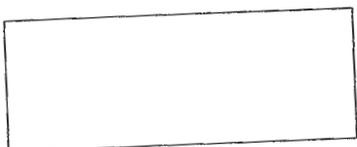
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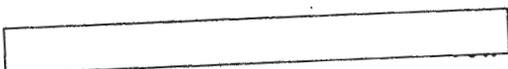
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Background

1. A group calling itself the Islamic Liberation Organization apparently kidnaped the four Soviet diplomats in Beirut on 30 September 1985, killed one of these hostages on 1 or 2 October, and still holds the remaining three. The principal demand of the kidnapers has been the withdrawal of Syrian and pro-Syrian units from the Tripoli area. [   ] believes that the kidnapers are actually members of a Sunni fundamentalist group in West Beirut known as the Islamic Jama'a. The group's leader, Shaykh Maher Hamud, is sympathetic to the Islamic Unification Movement (IUM), a Lebanese Sunni fundamentalist group also known as Tawhid. The IUM, led by radical cleric Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, is based in the northern Lebanese port of Tripoli, where it has been fighting a war against Syria and Syrian-backed militias. The IUM receives support from Iran and is fighting alongside pro-Arafat Palestinians, whose presence the Syrians are trying to eliminate. [   ]

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2. There is a strong possibility that the Soviet hostages still remain in Beirut. It would be difficult for the captors to transport them outside the city, because such movement would involve passing through numerous Christian and Syrian checkpoints. [   ]

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3. Neither the Soviets nor the Syrians are likely to have much success in pinpointing the location of the hostages in the foreseeable future. West Beirut and its sprawling southern slums are a maze of densely populated neighborhoods, each controlled by different sectarian militias. The pervasive Syrian intelligence network in Beirut may ascertain the general area in which the hostages are being held--and, we believe, would share this information with the Soviets*--but it would be unlikely to acquire the "hard target" information needed to identify the precise building(s) in which the diplomats are located. [   ]

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4. The Soviets probably suspect that the IUM or its sympathizers are responsible for the kidnapings and therefore would be likely to focus any possible retaliation on IUM targets in Tripoli. They may, however, suspect that the radical Shia Hizballah organization also is involved, especially since the two groups are allied. Moreover, some of the anonymous telephone callers have claimed the operation in the name of "Islamic Jihad", a common cover name for the Hizballah. [   ] the Hizballah was not involved, but the Soviets may lack reliable intelligence discounting a Hizballah role. Thus, if the Soviets chose to retaliate against the radical Shia organization, they could target several locations in the Bekaa Valley, including the Hizballah

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*This is a key assumption in this paper.

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headquarters near Ba'labakk and several training camps in the mountains. Nevertheless, we believe that the IUM headquarters and strongholds in Tripoli would be the most likely Soviet targets for any retaliation.

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Soviet Reaction Thus Far

5. To date, the Soviet response to the hostage situation has been relatively cautious and low-key, suggesting that Moscow intends to exhaust all diplomatic avenues and does not want the affair blown out of proportion. In their public statements, the Soviets have carefully avoided any threats, probably because they do not want to be seen as incapable of following through on them.

-- Moscow's first public response to the kidnaping was a brief TASS dispatch on 1 October carried on "Vremya", the Soviet evening news, and reprinted by Pravda and Izvestiya on 2 October. The report condemned the kidnaping, characterized it as a gross violation of international law, and stated that "competent agencies" were taking steps to ensure the safety of the hostages.

-- On 3 October, TASS carried an official Soviet government statement condemning the kidnaping and the murder of one of the hostages and criticizing unnamed third parties for not doing all they could to gain the hostages' release. In a conversation with US Embassy officials in Moscow, a mid-level member of the Soviet State Committee for Science and Technology claimed that the "third party" reference was directed at Iran. The Soviet official also said that while Syria was helping, it was not doing all it could and was constrained by local conditions.

-- Gorbachev basically sidestepped a question about the hostages during his Paris press conference on 4 October.

-- When asked on 7 October about the kidnapers' demand that Reagan and Gorbachev must solve the Lebanese problem before any hostages would be released, the Soviet charge' in Beirut said Moscow would listen to reasonable requests but could not be expected to take responsibility for all the world's ills.

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7. The Soviets may even have urged the Syrians to agree to the "cease-fire" in Tripoli on 3 October, in an attempt to

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facilitate the hostages' release. ▮▮▮▮▮▮

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▮▮▮▮▮▮ the Soviets are putting considerable pressure on Syria to obtain the freeing of the diplomats. ▮▮▮

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8. Moreover, one Soviet official ▮▮▮▮▮▮

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▮▮▮ has stated that the Soviets are trying to locate the hostages and would strike those responsible. The Syrians, ▮▮▮▮▮▮ have warned Lebanese fundamentalist leaders that unless the hostages are released, the Soviets will retaliate. The Soviets probably hope that their private remarks eventually will reach the IUM. ▮▮▮▮

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9. To date, we have detected no changes in Soviet military readiness levels or force posture in reaction to the hostage crisis. Except for those units committed to Afghanistan, Soviet military forces are engaged in routine training activity.

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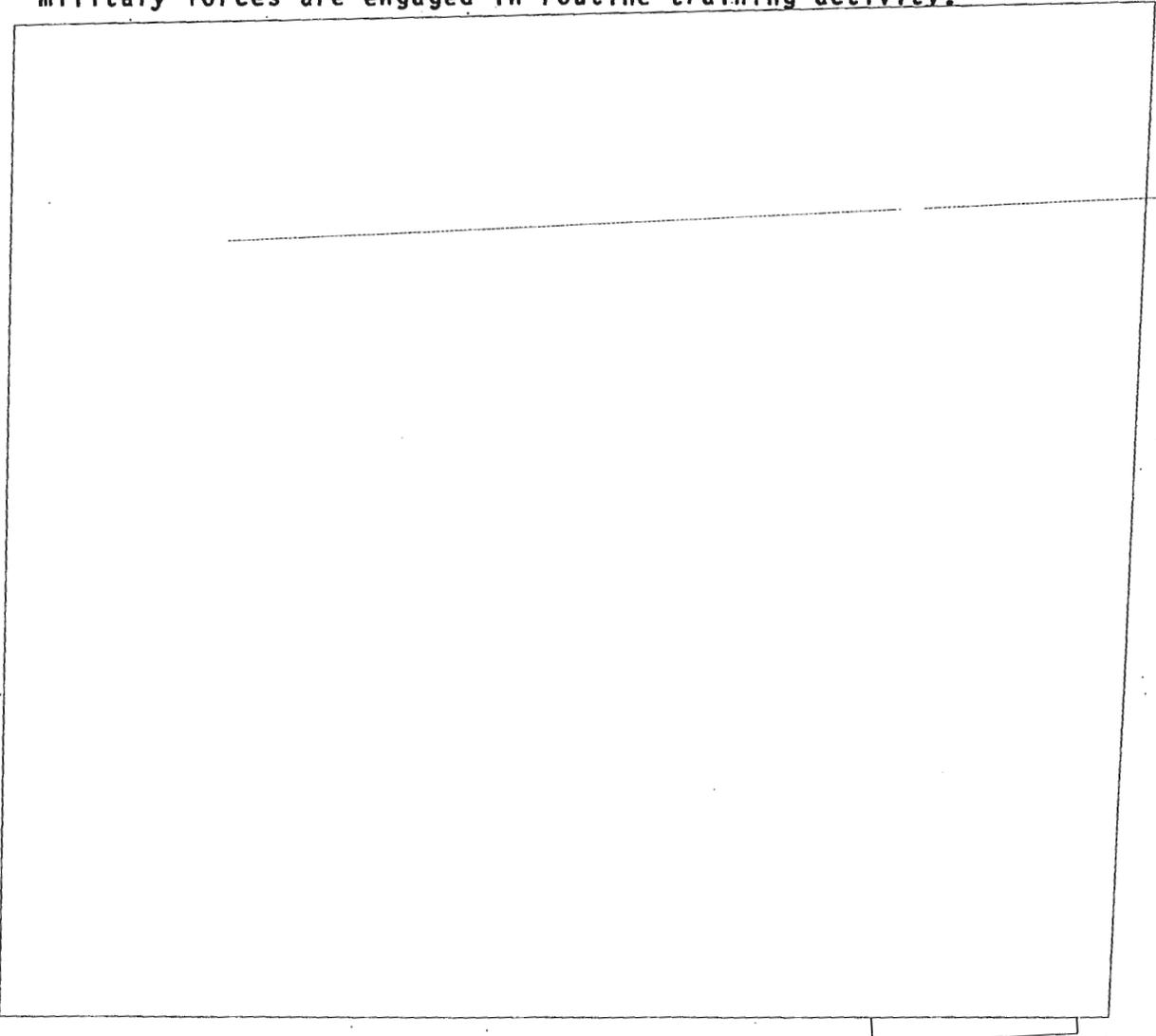
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11. The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron remains at a low level of roughly 25 ships, including four major combatants, six submarines, and two intelligence collection ships. Currently, no Soviet amphibious ships--which carry naval infantry troops--are even operating in the Mediterranean. Two Soviet IL-38 ASW and reconnaissance aircraft which were deployed to Syria before the hostage-taking, along with the intelligence collection ships and one combatant (either a frigate or a destroyer), have been conducting routine surveillance against US naval forces exercising in the central Mediterranean. Currently, a cruiser, a frigate, and three diesel-powered submarines are located in the eastern Mediterranean. Naval aircraft and surface ship training activity in the Black Sea continues at routine levels.

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Possible Soviet Options

12. The Soviets have a number of options--or responses-- potentially available to them. These range from diplomatic and political initiatives to actual military operations either to rescue the hostages or retaliate against the terrorists and their supporters.

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13. From the standpoint of possible military actions, the Soviets probably would be able, over time, to overcome the various operational obstacles and to bring to bear whatever size force they might deem necessary to carry out any planned operation in Lebanon. The Soviets' major problem areas in terms of military "solutions", however, probably would be the lack of accurate, timely intelligence (for a rescue mission) and the possible political repercussions within the Arab world--and in particular, the reaction of Syrian President Assad--to the various military options. Only in the case of a truly large-scale employment of Soviet military forces would the US be likely to detect the preparations leading up to such an operation.

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14. _Diplomatic._ The Soviets might well decide that their best course of action would be to continue to pursue all available diplomatic channels. Even if they were planning some kind of rescue or retaliatory action, we would expect them to maintain a high level of activity on this front. At the very least, it would buy time and increase the chance of the Soviets, Syrians, or another party in Lebanon obtaining better intelligence on where the hostages are. It also would serve as a cover for other options. Moreover, it would be the easiest and least risky course available since it would not run the risk of a humiliating failure, loss of additional lives--both Soviet and Arab--or leave Moscow open to the charges of great power chauvinism, imperialism, or state terrorism that they have leveled at the US and Israel in similar situations. Nor would it risk alienating the Arabs.

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15. As part of their diplomatic and political initiatives, the Soviets might decide to make public threats of retaliation against those responsible for the hostage crisis. Thus far, they apparently have avoided public calls for retaliation, although-- as noted earlier--they apparently have been making such threats privately. [redacted]

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16. The Soviets might decide to make such threats public in an effort to increase the pressure on the terrorists, at a minimum expenditure of resources. But Moscow would have to keep in mind that the US, in a similar predicament, already had followed this course of action and found that it had not succeeded. Moscow probably believes that the terrorists would respond to public Soviet threats by doing nothing or, even worse, by killing more of the hostages, thus causing additional damage to Soviet prestige. [redacted]

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Military Option - Rescue

17. The Soviets could also be swayed by the argument that forceful action would be needed to deter future terrorist acts and that to do nothing would make the USSR appear ineffectual and indecisive. The Soviets might fear that the present situation would drag on and on and that the longer it did so, the more at risk the hostages would be. The Syrians could, for example, launch a renewed assault on Tripoli, and the hostages could be executed by their captors. [redacted]
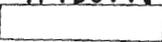
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18. In these circumstances, a rescue operation would, at least intuitively, appear to be Moscow's best military option. A successful rescue--which cleanly extricated the hostages without undue loss of life among them, their rescuers, or innocent civilians--would make the USSR look strong, particularly in comparison to the United States. Because there is clear precedent and apparent "legitimacy" for such rescue operations, most of the world probably would give at least tacit support to such a Soviet action. In addition, Moscow might hope that a successful rescue mission would deter other terrorist groups from taking Soviet hostages in the future. [redacted]

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19. To succeed, a rescue operation in Beirut using Soviet forces would have to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. West Beirut is one of the most heavily-armed, violent cities in the world. Militiamen from a variety of sectarian groups patrol every city block. A Soviet rescue team probably would be mistaken for Israelis, Americans, or Europeans and almost certainly would be fired upon by Lebanese and Palestinian fighters in the area; i.e., the potential for a military fiasco would be extremely great. [redacted]
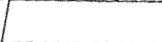
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20. A successful rescue operation, therefore, would require extremely precise and timely intelligence concerning the hostages' location(s). It is likely that the three men are being moved frequently, which only adds to the intelligence problem and

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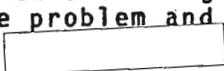
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the operational difficulties of rescuing them.   3.5(c)

21. The best hope the Soviets have for acquiring the
necessary intelligence is through Syrian sources. We believe the
Syrians would inform the Soviets if they knew where the hostages
were being held, but the Syrians themselves apparently have been
unable to determine the location of the hostages. Past
experience suggests the Syrians will not be able to provide the
necessary intelligence to the Soviets, although it is possible
that through some unilateral source or fortuitous event, the
Soviets might themselves be able to discover the whereabouts of   3.5(c)
the hostages.

22. Assuming the Soviets were successful in acquiring the
necessary intelligence, they then would have to evaluate the
situation in terms of whether or not a rescue attempt would be
feasible. Moreover, to a degree likely to discomfit the Soviets,
luck would play a major role in a rescue operation--particularly
in regard to a small unit operation. The Soviets realize that
such operations--especially when done in response to events not
controlled by Moscow--can turn into disasters when the unexpected
occurs, and the Soviets realize there is little that can be done   3.5(c)
to salvage such a mission if it goes sour.

23. Surprise and speed would be critical, and the need for
secrecy would severely constrain the scale of Soviet military
operations. This probably would compel the Soviets to use the
smallest possible force deemed capable of conducting the
mission. The more complicated the defenses surrounding the
hostages, the more Soviet forces would be needed to overcome them
and the greater the likelihood that surprise would be lost and
the hostages executed. Not only would a large military force be
of little value in a rescue attempt, it--in fact--would be
counter-productive to the intended goal. It is possible that
Soviet planners would conclude that the defenses in the target
area were of such strength that a small force would be unable to
pull off the mission and that a sufficiently large force to do   3.5(c)
the job would tip off the terrorists and jeopardize the
mission.

24. Potential Rescue Forces. Evidence from a number of
high-level KGB defectors strongly suggests that the Soviets do
not have a specially-trained force for counter-terrorist
operations abroad similar to those found in the West.
Accordingly, they would be forced to create an ad hoc unit using
personnel from other elements of their armed forces and security
services. Among the possible candidates would be airborne
troops, naval infantry units, Spetsnaz troops, or, most likely, a
KGB security detachment. It is unlikely that any Soviet rescue
force would number more than 125 men--a company--and it probably
would be considerably less. A larger Soviet force--of battalion
size, for example--probably would have to fight its way to the
objective, and, even more difficult, fight its way out. Such
combat almost certainly would warn the captors, and lead to the   3.5(c)

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immediate execution of the hostages.

25. Deployment of any small-scale Soviet rescue force probably would be done by a civil airliner to Damascus (if the operation were to be conducted over land), or by submarine or merchant ship (if it were to be done by sea). The Soviets almost certainly would want the assistance of Syrian commandos in the planning and execution of the operation.

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26. Planners would have to take into account not only how the hostages would be rescued, but how they and their liberators would be extracted. They would also have to plan how to disengage the rescue party in the event the operation failed. Any number of methods could be used: surreptitious entry via motor vehicle, a quick helicopter assault, or a commando-style landing from the sea. Because there is such a high probability that the rescuers would be detected, upon entry, by the seasoned militias of West Beirut, the inclusion of Syrian commandos in the rescue party would be highly desirable to assist the Soviets in reaching the target area.

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27. The following are the most likely examples of Soviet forces that might be used in a small paramilitary rescue operation:

-- A select team of KGB operatives, possibly assisted by Syrian commandos who know the terrain and the language, could clandestinely infiltrate Beirut, take the captors by surprise, and hope to get back to Syrian-controlled areas without attracting the attention--and inviting the fire--of every armed group in Beirut. Such an operation would be risky, but the implications of failure would be small--i.e., the hostages and some KGB personnel would be killed. The KGB personnel in such an operation would be skilled in paramilitary operations and probably would be from the KGB's Department 8 of the Illegals (i.,e., "S") Directorate.

-- A GRU Spetsnaz unit, organized specially for the mission, could be used. It probably would involve about 125 Spetsnaz personnel, and would be commanded by a dozen KGB

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officers.* This operation also would depend on stealth
and surprise, but would be far more conspicuous. The
Soviets would use it if they determined a requirement for
additional forces to overwhelm the captors and extricate
the hostages from Beirut. Such a rescue force primarily
would be armed with individual automatic weapons, but
some crew-served weapons would allow it to engage
Beirut's militias for a short period during the   3.5(c)
extraction phase.

28. Although this latter option allows for more flexibility
if opposition were stiff, it has disadvantages. The rescue force
would have to pass through numerous and often unanticipated
Beirut "checkpoints" if it moved through the streets, and a well-
armed Soviet company could not pass unnoticed or unopposed in
Beirut. Several helicopters would be required to move the force
from behind Syrian lines into downtown Beirut (about 15 kms) and
these could attract hostile--if unsophisticated--ground fire.
Losing helicopters in a special operation near Beirut would be
disastrous to the mission. There is little the Soviets could do
that would minimize the risk--even including making the insertion   3.5(c)
at night.

29. A less likely--but nonetheless possible--Soviet action
would be to use a team of about 200 airborne-trained naval
infantrymen (from the Black Sea Fleet's 2,400-man brigade) for a
helicopter rescue mission in Beirut. They could be loaded onto
an amphibious ship or Moskva-class helicopter carrier and reach
Tripoli in three to four days. These troops are spread
throughout the brigade's four infantry battalions, however, and
they do not normally train together. Furthermore, we have no
evidence that the naval infantry has ever trained for a rescue
operation in an urban area. The brigade also has a
reconnaissance company and underwater demolition teams trained
for highly mobile, unconventional combat. These units could be
covertly inserted from the Mediterranean, but they probably have
no experience in moving rapidly through a hostile urban
environment.   3.5(c)

30. A conventional, large-scale Soviet airborne operation
in the Beirut area would appear to be the least likely of all

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*   the Soviets used a KGB
commanded, battalion-sized GRU Spetsnaz unit to assault the
Presidential Palace in Kabul in 1979, an operation in some ways
analogous to a rescue attempt.   the   3.3(b)(1)
Soviets had no standing unit for such an operation. As a result
of their experience in Afghanistan, additional officers of the
KGB were to receive paramilitary training, but the officers were
not to be organized into a standard unit. Rather, they would
serve in regular KGB positions, but would be available for   3.5(c)
special operations when the need arose.   3.5(c)

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possible Soviet rescue missions. A large force would have no chance of reaching the objective undetected, and it undoubtedly would become entangled in heavy fighting, which would probably ensure the death of the hostages.

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Military Option - Retaliation

31. Whatever the outcome of the hostage crisis--release, rescue, failed rescue, or execution--Moscow could choose to retaliate militarily against the Islamic Unification Movement. This group presents the Soviets with a relatively easy target, because its stronghold is the city of Tripoli and the majority of its members are located there. Moscow could take retaliatory measures against specific targets, such as an air strike against the terrorists' headquarters--which presumably could be located with Syrian help--or kidnaping or killing selected Sunni leaders. Alternatively, retaliation could take the form of more general, massive military actions against Tripoli--such as bombing the city. Under the latter scenario, the Soviets would be certain of inflicting major damage on the Unification Movement, but also would be guilty of killing large numbers of innocent civilians and--perhaps more importantly from Moscow's perspective--members of other Arab groups, especially the Palestinians.*

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32. The USSR would be motivated to retaliate militarily against the kidnapers primarily to project an image of an assertive and strong superpower willing to fight back against terrorism to protect its people. The failure of the United States to take strong action on behalf of its hostages in Lebanon and the resulting perceptions of American weakness probably would contribute to Soviet calculations concerning retaliation. The high probability of success for such an operation also would influence a Soviet decision. Given sufficient time, the Soviets could mount virtually any level of military attack against Tripoli.

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33. The major factors militating against Soviet military retaliation upon the Islamic Unification Movement are political. Any Soviet military action--from massive bombing of Tripoli to a limited strike against the sect's headquarters-- probably would be counterproductive to Soviet political goals in the Middle East. Even the assassination or kidnaping of the sect's leaders would be unlikely to deter this group, which probably is an independent offshoot of the IUM. To have any impact, a Soviet attack on Tripoli would have to be openly Soviet and massive to distinguish it from routine Syrian shelling, and, as such, almost certainly would be viewed by many Arab states as

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*In addition, Tripoli is the home of Lebanese Prime Minister Karami, a friend of Moscow, who would not take kindly to having his city leveled.

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an attack against Arabs as a whole. (Arafat's PLO troops fight
alongside the Unification Movement members in Tripoli, for
example, and a massive Soviet attack would risk alienating Arafat
and his followers.) A large-scale attack, therefore, potentially
could damage Soviet prestige in the Middle East and elsewhere
and, at least temporarily, set back many years of diplomatic
efforts there.

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34. Furthermore, Soviet military retaliation probably would
not deter the terrorists, and most likely would compel them to
attempt further and more damaging actions against the Soviets in
Lebanon and elsewhere in the region. A cycle of retribution
easily could continue until the Soviets were forced to withdraw
entirely from Lebanon.

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35. Surgical Strike. Moscow, probably would consider that
one of its better retaliation options would be to conduct a
limited air strike against specific targets in Tripoli such as
the IUM's headquarters. A surgical air strike against a single
target would require the accuracy of precision (i.e., laser or
command) guided munitions carried by Soviet SU-24 Fencer light
bombers, although the Soviets do not train for, and therefore are
unprepared to carry out, precision strikes.

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36. The Soviets probably would not choose to conduct these
strikes using only bases in the USSR because the aircraft do not
have adequate operational range to reach Lebanon, and then return
to the USSR, without inflight refueling--a Soviet capability
which is only in the training stage and has not been
operationally employed. These aircraft could deploy first to
Syria, however, and stage their strike from Syrian airfields if
permitted; alternatively, the aircraft could conduct their
strikes from Soviet airfields but subsequently recover and refuel
in Syria. This movement would require overflight clearances from
Turkey or Iran and Iraq, countries which have not been known to
grant such privileges to Soviet strike aircraft.* The Soviet
pilots, moreover, probably would require at least several days
training and orientation in the Syrian and Lebanese environment
to effectively carry out the strike.

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*The Soviets have never disregarded a country's refusal to
grant overflight clearance and they probably would not attempt to
pass over these countries without prior permission. Moscow's
general respect for airspace sovereignty probably stems from
sensitivity toward its own airspace as well as a desire not to
risk losing future clearances for commercial or military
transport aircraft. An attempt to covertly fly across these
countries also would present considerable operational problems.
The Soviets would have to consider that NATO air defenses in
Turkey would detect their aircraft and that combat aircraft also
would have a difficult time trying to pass through the hostile
environment between Iraq and Iran.

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37. If the Soviets were unable to obtain overflight clearances, as is likely, the movement of Soviet tactical aircraft to Syria would require their disassembly and shipment-- probably by air. Even moving a small number of some five or 10 aircraft would require about an additional week to reassemble and check out the aircraft, in addition to the time needed to orient the pilots. A less likely option would be Soviet use of later model Syrian SU-22 Fitter aircraft, which we believe are capable of firing precision guided munitions, but this would require Syrian permission and the use of Soviet markings on the aircraft.

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38. Large-Scale Bombing. Although we believe a large-scale Soviet bombing raid against Tripoli would be extremely unlikely because of the negative effects this would have on Soviet relations with the Arab World, Soviet medium-range bombers easily could reach Lebanon from Soviet bases. The aircraft still would have to obtain overflight approval from Turkey, or Iran and Iraq, or--if they opted for a longer route--from Yugoslavia. Depending on the scale of damage desired, Moscow probably would send anywhere from a squadron of nine bombers to a regiment of some 30, and the Soviets most likely would use TU-16 Badger or TU-22m Backfire assets from their Strategic Air Army at Smolensk. In addition, Soviet naval air forces subordinate to the Black Sea Fleet include 20 Backfire and 20 Blinder aircraft that are capable of performing bombing missions, and 56 Badgers that could be modified to carry bombs. The naval Backfire, Blinder, and especially Badger crews have only limited training in free fall bombing, however, and their primary mission is against maritime targets.

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39. Although Soviet aircraft attacking Tripoli would face little or no threat from Lebanese-based air defenses, the USSR would have to take into account a possible reaction by US, NATO or Israeli forces. Regardless of the number of aircraft or their flight route, we almost certainly would detect the movement of Soviet combat aircraft into the region, and Moscow is aware that US Sixth Fleet naval air forces would be more than a match for any Soviet air forces sent into Lebanon. The Israelis also closely monitor foreign military forces in the eastern Mediterranean and the Levant, and Tel Aviv would be concerned over even small numbers of Soviet aircraft flying into Syria or Lebanon. Although Soviet tactical aircraft staging out of Syria for a strike could receive air cover from Soviet fighters, which had been shipped to Syria by air, again these would be no match for US or Israeli forces in the region. Bombers attacking directly from the USSR would not be accompanied by Soviet fighters, because of the latter's range limitations, and would be vulnerable to disruption by Western or Israeli forces.

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40. Naval Bombardment. The Soviets also possibly could decide to use their naval forces currently operating in the Mediterranean--or bring others in from the Black Sea--to bombard Tripoli. The Black Sea Fleet has one cruiser armed with

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12 152-mm guns and 12 100-mm guns, seven destroyers carrying a total of 28 130-mm guns, and several other units with the less effective 76-mm guns. Several of these ships now are in the Mediterranean and could be off Tripoli within a day or so. Others could enter the Mediterranean and be off Lebanon in several days. Such ships have provided simulated gunfire support for Soviet amphibious exercises, but would need forward observers in Tripoli to produce accurate barrages in attacks against specific areas or targets. Nevertheless, naval gunfire probably would not cause massive damage to the city.

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41. The USSR also has several submarines equipped with tactical cruise missiles now operating in the Mediterranean. These cruise missiles were designed to attack surface ships. Although most Soviet antiship cruise missiles also have an inherent, albeit limited, capability to engage land targets, their radar or infrared guidance systems would be highly inaccurate against a specific target within an urban environment, and large numbers of missiles would be required to cause widespread damage.

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42. Ground Assault. Neither the airborne troops or naval infantry would appear to be logical choices to conduct a retaliatory strike in Tripoli. The use of any significant number of Soviet forces on the ground for a retaliatory mission would entail major, unnecessary risks--for probably a negligible gain.

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43. Even if Soviet airborne or naval infantry forces were to be used only for a "surgical" strike against a selected target (i.e., the IUM's headquarters), the target would not likely be any more accessible than the hostages, and it would present the same problem for troops unfamiliar with unconventional military operations.

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44. In terms of a "punishment"-type operation, the naval infantry, for instance, is trained to secure beachheads for exploitation by ground forces and then to withdraw for operations elsewhere. A frontal assault from the sea against a heavily defended urban area--without massive support from ground and air forces--is beyond the naval infantry's capability. Soviet airborne forces would face comparable problems.

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45. Assassination/Kidnaping. Another possible Soviet retaliatory operation would be the assassination or kidnaping of members of the IUM or its offshoot, particularly the leaders. Although the Soviets probably would want to conduct such an action in cooperation with the Syrians, it is unclear--in this case--whether the Syrians would want to have a hand in retaliatory operations against such individuals. Other than in Afghanistan, there is little reporting of Soviet assassination and kidnaping operations in recent years; however, the Soviets rarely have had the motive, opportunity, and justification for such an operation, and we therefore are reluctant to exclude it as a possibility.

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46.   Such an operation would require the same high quality intelligence as a rescue attempt, but would be easier because:

-- The Soviets would control the timing; they could act at their pleasure.

-- It is inherently simpler to kill a few people than to conduct an extraction of hostages.

The KGB's Department 8 is the most likely organization to carry out such assassinations or kidnapings. [ ]   3.5(c)

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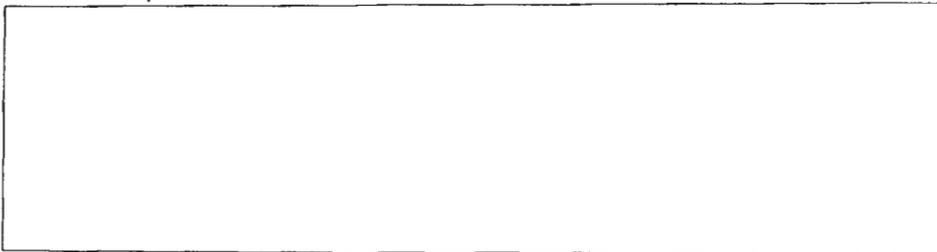
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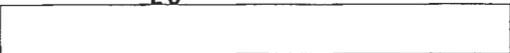
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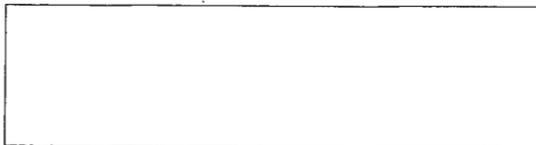
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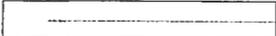
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