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June 12, 1982

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TO: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Alexander M. Haig, Jr. *o*

SUBJECT: Reply to Brezhnev's June 10 Letter on Lebanon

Given the tenuous ceasefire in Lebanon, I recommend that you respond promptly to Brezhnev's June 10 letter to you on the crisis. Brezhnev's letter was moderate in tone and lacked any hint of threat or bluster. In this sense, it was more restrained than his June 9 letter to you, despite the heavy losses incurred by Syria since the first letter was written.

We cannot assume that the relatively restrained content and tone of Brezhnev's correspondence with you during the crisis conveys any weakening of Soviet resolve to support Syria. Indeed, I believe that we can expect a Soviet effort to replace Syrian combat losses to begin almost immediately. It is nonetheless striking that the Soviets did so little to assist their Syrian allies and PLO clients over the past few days. They did not mount a major resupply effort, nor were there any dramatic changes in the readiness status of Soviet forces in the area or in the Soviet Union itself. Even Soviet rhetoric lacked any hint of threats to Israel or the U.S. and any Soviet commitment to assist their beleaguered friends. The net result can only be described as a major setback to Soviet prestige and objectives in the Middle East. The Soviets can be expected to begin immediately to repair the damage to their position.

The draft reply stresses that continuance of the ceasefire depends upon restraint by all parties and that the Soviets have a responsibility to use their influence with Syria and the PLO constructively. It forcefully rejects Brezhnev's allegations about Phil Habib's "obstructionism" and underscores that his mission will continue. Finally, it rejects Brezhnev's repetition of Soviet media charges that we had advance knowledge of the Israeli attack.

Recommendation

That you send the attached reply to Brezhnev's letter.

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RDS-1 6/11/02

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DATE 7/25/00

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E.O. 12065: RDS-1, 6/12/02 (BREMER, LP)  
TAGS: PEPR, UR, US  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT BREZHNEV

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1. PLEASE DELIVER THE FOLLOWING LETTER FROM PRESIDENT  
REAGAN TO PRESIDENT BREZHNEV IN RESPONSE TO BREZHNEV'S JUNE  
10 MOLLINK MESSAGE.

2. BEGIN TEXT: DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I HAVE CAREFULLY  
CONSIDERED YOUR LETTER OF JUNE 10.

3. AS YOU KNOW, AT MY URGING THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT AN-  
NOUNCED JUNE 11 THAT ISRAELI FORCES IN LEBANON WOULD  
OBSERVE A CEASEFIRE FROM 12:00 P.M. THAT DAY. UNFORTUNATE-  
LY, FIGHTING BETWEEN PLO AND ISRAELI FORCES CONTINUED.

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MY GOVERNMENT WENT, AGAIN, TO THE ISRAELIS URGING RESTRAINT. THIS APPROACH RESULTED IN A NEW ISRAELI CEASEFIRE -- AGREED TO BY THE PLO -- TO GO INTO EFFECT AT 9:00 P.M. (LEBANESE TIME) JUNE 12.

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4. THIS DECISION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL IS A CONSTRUCTIVE STEP THAT COULD RESULT IN A HALT TO THE CONFLICT IN LEBANON WHICH HAS RAISED SUCH GRAVE DANGERS TO PEACE THROUGHOUT THE REGION. OBVIOUSLY, THE MAINTENANCE OF THE CEASEFIRE DEPENDS UPON RESTRAINT BY ALL PARTIES TO THE

CONFLICT. I SHALL CONTINUE TO USE MY INFLUENCE WITH ISRAEL TO THAT END; I EXPECT THAT YOU WILL URGE SIMILAR RESTRAINT ON SYRIA AND THE PLO.

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5. THE CEASEFIRE IS ONLY A FIRST STEP TOWARD A LASTING SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH ARE AT THE ROOT OF THE RECENT TRAGIC EVENTS IN LEBANON. MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO WORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 508 AND 509, AND THE CREATION OF POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WILL ENSURE THE INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON UNDER AN EFFECTIVE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE WILL ALSO REQUIRE THAT ISRAEL BE ASSURED THAT ATTACKS ON ITS NORTHERN TERRITORIES ORIGINATING IN LEBANON NOT BE RESUMED.

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6. MY PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE IN THE AREA, AMBASSADOR PHILIP HABIB, WILL CONTINUE HIS CONTACTS WITH ALL CONCERNED PARTIES, INCLUDING THE GOVERNMENTS OF ISRAEL, SYRIA, AND LEBANON WITH A VIEW TO WORKING OUT SUCH ARRANGEMENTS. IN THIS CONNECTION, I MUST REJECT EMPHATICALLY THE SUGGESTION IN YOUR LETTER THAT AMBASSADOR HABIB'S ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA HAVE OBSTRUCTED THE SEARCH FOR PEACE. INDEED, AMBASSADOR HABIB HAS CARRIED OUT HIS DIFFICULT MISSION WITH

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DISTINCTION, AND HIS EFFORTS TO ASSIST THE PARTIES IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE WILL CONTINUE.

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7. I AGREE WITH YOU THAT POLEMICS SHOULD HAVE NO PLACE IN OUR EXCHANGES AT ANY TIME -- BUT PARTICULARLY DURING THIS CRITICAL PERIOD. HOWEVER, YOUR LETTER CONTAINS THE ALLEGATION WHICH HAS ALSO APPEARED IN THE SOVIET MEDIA THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN AWARE OF THE ISRAELI ATTACK IN ADVANCE. THIS CHARGE IS TOTALLY WITHOUT FOUNDATION; THUS, IN KEEPING WITH YOUR OWN VIEW OF POLEMICS, IT HAS NO APPROPRIATE PLACE IN COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN US.

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8. IN CLOSING, I WISH TO REITERATE THAT MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE ITS ENERGETIC EFFORTS TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. SINCERELY,  
RONALD REAGAN. END TEXT. HAIG  
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