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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

CIA WASH DC PRIORITY 4409

USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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NODIS

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PTER, LE

SUBJECT: REMAINING SEVEN HOSTAGES: ICRC INVOLVEMENT

1. ~~C~~ ENTIRE TEXT

2. PLEASE DELIVER THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING SECRETARY TO ICRC PRESIDENT ALEXANDER HAY ON AN URGENT BASIS. THERE WILL BE NO SIGNED ORIGINAL.

3. DEAR PRESIDENT HAY: ICRC'S HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE TWA HOSTAGES PROMPTS THE U.S. TO SOLICIT

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BY CM
NARA, DATE 2/6/03



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ICRC'S ASSISTANCE ONCE AGAIN. AS YOU MAY KNOW, WE HAD

HOPED TO SECURE ALONG WITH THE TWA HOSTAGES THE RELEASE OF SEVEN OTHER AMERICANS WHO HAVE BEEN MISSING IN LEBANON DURING THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF. THERE WAS GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT IN THE ADMINISTRATION THAT THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE, DESPITE OUR EFFORTS. THE SAFE RETURN OF THOSE SEVEN MISSING AMERICANS REMAINS A TOP PRIORITY.

WE ARE GRAVELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE WELFARE OF THE SEVEN, SOME OF WHOM HAVE BEEN IN CAPTIVITY SINCE MARCH OF LAST YEAR. ESCAPED HOSTAGE JEREMY LEVIN RECOUNTED TO US THAT HE WAS CHAINED TO A RADIATOR IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR A FULL YEAR. I WOULD BE GREATLY ASSURED, AS WOULD THE FAMILIES OF THOSE BEING HELD, IF THE ICRC COULD OBTAIN ACCESS TO THE CAPTIVES ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, IN ORDER TO ASSURE THEIR WELL-BEING.

BY WAY OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION, WE HAVE BEEN IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH SENIOR LEBANESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AS WELL AS WITH KEY POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS THERE, AS PART OF OUR EFFORT TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF THE SEVEN. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS WE BELIEVE ARE IN A POSITION TO BE HELPFUL. THOSE CONTACTS ARE CONTINUING.

THE RECURRING DEMAND OF THOSE HOLDING THE SEVEN IS FOR THE RELEASE OF 17 DAWA PARTY PRISONERS INCARCERATED IN KUWAIT, WHERE THEY WERE TRIED AND CONVICTED FOR THE 1983 BOMBINGS OF FRENCH, U.S., AND KUWAITI INSTALLATIONS THERE. THREE OF THE PRISONERS WERE SENTENCED TO DEATH FOLLOWING THE TRIAL IN MARCH 1984. THAT SENTENCE MUST BE CONFIRMED BY THE KUWAITI EMIR BEFORE IT CAN BE CARRIED OUT. AS WAS THE CASE WITH THE TWA HIJACKING, U.S. POLICY IS CLEAR WE CANNOT CONCEDE TO TERRORIST DEMANDS, NOR

CAN WE PRESSURE OTHERS TO DO SO.

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WE HAVE STRONG REASON TO BELIEVE THAT AT LEAST SIX OF THOSE SEVEN ARE ALIVE. OUR UNCERTAINTY REGARDING THE SEVENTH DERIVES FROM A COMPLETE LACK OF ANY INFORMATION REGARDING HIM SINCE HIS DISAPPEARANCE SIX MONTHS AGO. WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN ANY CONFIRMATION ABOUT HIS WHEREABOUTS, NOR HAS ANY GROUP CLAIMED TO BE HOLDING HIM.

WE ARE CONVINCED THAT ICRC'S EFFECTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN ASSURING THE WELFARE AND THE SUBSEQUENT RELEASE OF THE TWA HOSTAGES SET A FAVORABLE PRECEDENT WHICH CAN SERVE AS A BASIS FOR AN ICRC ROLE IN ASSURING THE WELFARE OF THOSE AMERICANS WHO CONTINUE TO LANGUISH IN CAPTIVITY. SINCERELY, MICHAEL ARMACOST, ACTING SECRETARY.

4. SEPTTEL PROVIDES YOU WITH THE NAMES, DATE OF DISAPPEARANCE AND OTHER PERSONAL DATA REGARDING THE SEVEN AMERICANS. YOU SHOULD PROVIDE THIS INFO TO PRESIDENT HAY ALONG WITH THE LETTER. PLEASE REPORT HIS RESPONSE.

5. MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. ARMACOST