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The President. Well, let me say, I think that, as a practical matter, the whole peace process needs to show some movement again before you can expect much to happen on the Lebanese front. There have been discussions; the Secretary of State has been to the region many, many times, and the United States is always concerned about the position of Lebanon. And let me say, I'm somewhat encouraged by the progress of the recent talks, the current ongoing talks with the Palestinians and the Israelis. If we can get the whole thing moving again, that's the best thing for Lebanon. We're working on it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. in the Residence at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message on the Observance of the Anniversary of the Terrorist Attack in Beirut, Lebanon

October 18, 1996

Thirteen years ago, as dawn was breaking in Beirut, Lebanon, a suicide-bomber drove a truck filled with explosives into a compound that housed American Marines. More than 240 Americans were killed by this single act of hatred. Almost simultaneously, a similar assault claimed the lives of dozens of French soldiers.

Now, in this place of repose and respect, representatives from over thirty nations join to honor these victims and all the others around the world who have lost their lives at the hands of terrorists. We remember the passengers of Pan Am Flight 103, whose journey ended in the skies over Lockerbie, Scotland. We remember the victims of the World Trade Center bombing, and the 168 innocent people—among them helpless children—who were murdered in Oklahoma City. We remember those Americans in Riyadh and Dhahran, Saudia Arabia, who gave their lives in service to our nation. And we remember those murdered on the streets of Tel Aviv, or poisoned in the Tokyo subway, or killed by a car bomb on Canary Wharf in London, or assaulted on an Army base near Belfast, and so many others who have suffered the pain and outrage of a terrorist attack.

This remembrance ceremony is a fitting tribute to the victims of terrorism worldwide, and I want to thank Carmella LaSpada and the "No Greater Love" organization for their steadfast commitment to honor and remember those victims, as well as the brave men and women who have died in service to America. For all the positive advances of our time, the threat of terrorism looms larger in a world grown ever closer. That is why we must work together with other nations more than ever to prevent terrorists from acting and to capture them if they do. And we are doing just that.

But just as important as the strength of our policies is the strength of our spirit. To the family members gathered at Arlington National Cemetery, I know that no words can comfort you for the loss of your loved ones. The passage of time will never erode the place they hold in your hearts. But let us move beyond our sorrow and anger to find joy in the memories of those we honor here. Let us give thanks for the lives they lived, find inspiration in all they achieved, and together strive to realize the shining dreams they left behind. Let us unite the community of civilized nations to stand up for freedom and stand against the scourge of terrorist violence.

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: This message was read by Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Anthony Lake at the October 23 commemoration for victims of terrorism. It was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 18 but was not issued as a White House press release.