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June 16, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSESTATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The assassination of our Ambassador in Beirut, Francis E. Meloy, Jr., of our Counselor for Economic Affairs, Robert O. Waring, and of their driver, Zohair Moghrabi, is an act of senseless, outrageous brutality. I extend to their families my own deep sense of sorrow and that of all the American people.

These men were on their way to meet with President-elect Sarkis. They were on a mission of peace, seeking to do what they could in the service of their country to help restore order, stability, and reason to Lebanon. Their deaths add another tragedy to the suffering which the Lebanese people have endured beyond measure.

These men had lived with danger for many weeks and did so with the dedication and disregard of personal safety which we have come to expect of the Foreign Service.

The goals of our policy must remain unchanged. The United States will not be deterred from its search for peace by these murders. I have instructed Secretary Kissinger to continue our intensive efforts in this direction. I will name a new Ambassador to Lebanon within the very near future to resume the mission Ambassador Meloy performed so brilliantly. I have also instructed the Secretary to get in touch with all of the governments in the area and with the Lebanese leaders to help identify the murderers and to see that they are brought to justice. I have also ordered that all appropriate resources of the United States undertake immediately to identify the persons or group responsible for this vicious act.

Those responsible for these brutal assassinations must be brought to justice. At the same time, we must continue our policy of seeking a peaceful solution in Lebanon. That is the way we can best honor the brave men who gave their lives for their country and for the cause of peace.