

News from Senator

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AUGUST 1, 1989 (202) 224-5358

TERRORISTS DRAW A LINE IN THE SAND TIME FOR ALLIES TO END "FREELANCING" ON HOSTAGE FRONT

MR. PRESIDENT:

THE TERRIBLE EVENTS OF YESTERDAY IN LEBANON REMIND US ANEW THAT A LINE HAS BEEN DRAWN IN THE SAND.

IT IS NOT A LINE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLIES -- THOUGH MANY WOULD RELISH LAYING DOWN THAT KIND OF LINE.

MORE SPECIFICALLY, IT IS NOT A LINE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL -- THOUGH THERE ARE MANY WHOSE ENTERPRISE WOULD PROFIT WERE THAT LINE DRAWN.

IT IS A MUCH CLEARER, AND MORE PERMANENT, LINE.

IT IS A LINE BETWEEN THOSE WHO PRACTICE, AND PROFIT FROM, TERRORISM -- AND THOSE WHO ARE ITS VICTIMS.

A LINE BETWEEN THOSE WHO ASCRIBE TO THE PROPOSITION THAT INDIVIDUAL HUMAN BEINGS HAVE UNIQUE AND INESTIMABLE VALUE -- AND THOSE WHO SEE HUMAN BEINGS AS VALUABLE ONLY BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL ADVANTAGE THEIR LIFELESS BODIES CAN BUY.

WE ARE ON ONE SIDE OF THAT LINE -- AND THE MURDERERS OF COLONEL WILLIAM HIGGINS ARE ON THE OTHER.

WE ARE ON ONE SIDE OF THAT LINE; AND IN OUR COMPANY ARE OUR CLOSEST ALLIES -- ISRAEL, NATO, JAPAN, AND THE OTHER CIVILIZED NATIONS OF THE WORLD.

AND ON THE OTHER ARE THE IRANS, THE LIBYAS, THE HEZBOLLAHS, THE, QUOTE, ORGANIZATIONS OF THE OPPRESSED OF THE EARTH, UNQUOTE -- ON THE OTHER SIDE ARE THOSE WHO SEE HUMAN BEINGS AS "CHIPS" IN SOME LETHAL AND IMMORAL POKER GAME.

MR. PRESIDENT: IT IS NOT A LINE OF DIFFERENCE IN POLICY OR EVEN NATIONAL INTEREST. IT IS A LINE OF DIFFERENCE IN PRINCIPLE; IN MORALITY; IN VALUES.

IT IS A DEFINING LINE. AND WHAT IT DEFINES, MOST OF ALL, IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM.

MR. PRESIDENT: WE CONFUSE THAT LINE, OR IGNORE IT, AT THE PERIL OF THE CIVILIZATION WHICH DEFINES US.

THAT DOESN'T MEAN THOSE OF US -- THOSE NATIONS -- ON OUR SIDE OF THE LINE; IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT WE DON'T MAKE MISTAKES. IT DOESN'T MEAN, IN PARTICULAR, THAT WE DON'T MAKE MISTAKES IN DEALING WITH THOSE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LINE.

WE DO MAKE THOSE MISTAKES.

THIS NATION MADE A DOOZY OF A MISTAKE IN THE IRAN-CONTRA AFFAIR. WE TRIED TO DEAL -- QUID PRO QUO -- WITH TERRORISTS. WE TRIED TO DEFINE, AND ADD UP, THE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE IN HAWK MISSILES.

WE WILL PAY FOR THAT TERRIBLE MISTAKE FOR A LONG TIME.

AND IT GIVES ME NO COMFORT THAT OTHERS ON OUR SIDE OF THE LINE HAVE MADE EQUALLY TERRIBLE MISTAKES. IT GIVES ME NO COMFORT THAT SOME OF OUR CLOSEST ALLIES HAVE BARGAINED FOR THE RELEASE OF THEIR HOSTAGES, EVEN THOUGH THAT VERY ACT OF BARGAINING COMPROMISED OUR COMMON FRONT AGAINST TERRORISM.

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IT GIVES ME NO COMFORT THAT THE WEST GERMANS MAY HAVE MADE SOME MISTAKES; AND THE FRENCH; AND THE BRITISH; AND ALMOST EVERYONE ELSE WITHIN THE ALLIANCE.

AND, TODAY, I AM NOT HAPPY THAT ONE OF OUR CLOSEST AND MOST IMPORTANT ALLIES, ISRAEL, HAS ALSO STRUCK OUT ALONE, FREE-LANCING, APPARENTLY IN THE INTEREST OF GAINING LEVERAGE TO WIN THE RELEASE OF SOME OF ITS CITIZENS HELD HOSTAGE.

I NOTE IN THIS MORNING'S WASHINGTON POST THAT ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER RABIN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ISRAELI ACTIONS HAD THREATENED WESTERN HOSTAGES. HE IS ALSO QUOTED IN THE POST AS SAYING THAT ISRAEL'S ABDUCTION OF OBEID WAS CARRIED OUT "IN ACCORDANCE WITH AN ISRAELI DECISION, WITH ISRAELI CONSIDERATIONS, AND FOR THE ISRAELI CAPTIVES -- AND WITHOUT BRINGING ANY OTHER ELEMENTS INTO THE PICTURE."

I CAN UNDERSTAND, AS A HUMAN BEING, HOW THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WOULD BE TEMPTED TO TAKE UNILATERAL ACTION TO WIN SOME "BARGAINING CHIPS" IN ITS EFFORTS TO WIN THE RELEASE OF ITS OWN CITIZENS FROM BARBARIC CAPTURE.

BUT I CANNOT CONDONE, AS A THINKING PERSON, HOW ANY GOVERNMENT -- OURS, THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, OR ANY OTHER CIVILIZED GOVERNMENT -- COULD EMBARK ON THIS UNILATERAL, FREE-LANCING COURSE, WITHOUT REGARD TO THE EFFECT ON INNOCENT CITIZENS OF OTHER FRIENDLY COUNTRIES; WITHOUT REGARD TO OUR COMMON FRONT AGAINST TERRORISM.

I CANNOT CONDONE IT, ANY MORE THAN -- IN RETROSPECT -- I CAN CONDONE WHAT SOME IN OUR GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE DONE IN THE IRAN-CONTRA AFFAIR; OR THOSE IN OTHER WESTERN GOVERNMENTS MAY HAVE DONE IN OTHER SITUATIONS.

IT IS ONE OF THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT CAN EASILY BE UNDERSTOOD FROM A HUMAN STANDPOINT; BUT MUST BE VIGOROUSLY DEPLORED FROM A REALISTIC STANDPOINT.

BUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT, IN ANY CASE, IS NOT WHETHER AN ACTION IS ABHORRED OR CONDONED; BUT WHETHER ALL OF US LEARN SOME LESSON FROM THE MISTAKES THAT ONE OF US HAS MADE.

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER. THE LINE IS BETWEEN US AND THEM; NOT US AND US.

LET US KEEP THAT LINE DISTINCT. LET US KEEP THAT LINE CLEAR IN OUR OWN MINDS.

AND LET US DEDICATE OURSELVES ANEW TO FORGE A COMMON FRONT; A COMMON, REALISTIC, TOUGH, EFFECTIVE STANCE AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM.

LET US MAKE THIS -- NOT JUST ONE ITEM -- BUT THE TOP ITEM IN OUR CONSULTATIONS WITHIN THE ALLIANCE.

LET US MAKE THIS AGENDA ITEM NUMBER ONE AT THE NEXT ALLIANCE SUMMIT -- A SUMMIT THAT, FOR THIS DISCUSSION, AT LEAST, OUGHT TO INCLUDE ALL OF OUR ALLIES AND FRIENDS, LIKE ISRAEL, THAT ENJOY A SPECIAL PLACE IN OUR COMMON STRUGGLE AGAINST THE SCOURGE OF TERRORISM.

MR. PRESIDENT: I PRAY THAT I AM WRONG, BUT I FEAR THAT I AM RIGHT. I BELIEVE THAT COLONEL WILLIAM HIGGINS HAS BEEN MURDERED. HIS MURDER -- HIS BLOOD -- IS ON THE HANDS OF HIS ASSASSINS; THESE LUNATICS WHO HIDE BEHIND THE TITLE OF "OPPRESSED ON EARTH." THEY ARE TO BLAME FOR WILLIAM HIGGINS DEATH -- NO ONE ELSE. AND THEY SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE AND PUNISHED.

BUT WILLIAM HIGGINS DEATH, IF IT HAS OCCURRED, IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY. IT IS ONLY ANOTHER CHAPTER -- ANOTHER LESSON.

A LESSON THAT WILL HAVE VALUE ONLY IF IT IS LEARNED, BY ALL OF US ON OUR SIDE OF THE LINE. A LESSON THAT THERE IS A LINE DRAWN IN THE SAND -- A LINE BETWEEN CIVILIZED CONDUCT, AND BARBARISM.

A LINE THAT WE MUST UNDERSTAND, AND ACT ON -- IF THE CIVILIZATION THAT ALL OF US ON OUR SIDE OF THE LINE HOLD DEAR IS TO BE PRESERVED.