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A Time of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

International terrorism has taken the lives of thousands of people around the world and continues to claim lives. It is most fitting that we set aside a time of remembrance for the victims of terrorism.

The United States has taken positive steps to stop the onslaught of terrorism against civilized society. We will continue to do so, because we keep in mind the value and dignity of every human being and the commission that Thomas Jefferson expressed so well when he wrote, "The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government."

The United States has a clear policy of combatting terrorism and of refusing to make concessions to terrorists. We have sought cooperation with all nations, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, to fight terrorism. We have put those who would instigate acts of terrorism against U.S. citizens or property on notice that we will vigorously confront this criminal behavior in every way—diplomatically, economically, legally, and, when necessary, militarily. We have demonstrated our resolve.

At this time of remembrance, we also reiterate our determination to secure the release of all Americans being held hostage abroad and our sympathy and understanding for their families.

We observe our time of remembrance for victims of terrorism on October 23. That is the third anniversary of the terrorist bombing of the United States compound in Beirut, Lebanon, in which 241 American servicemen, defenders of freedom and peace, lost their lives. As we mourn these men and all other victims of terrorism, as we honor them, and as we offer our heartfelt condolences to the families of victims, let us remind the world that our reflection and remembrance fortify our determination to deter and defeat terrorism.

The Congress, by Public Law 99-403, has designated October 23, 1986, as "A Time of Remembrance" for all victims of terrorism throughout the world and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 23, 1986, as a Time of Remembrance for all victims of terrorism throughout the world, and I urge all Americans to actively participate by flying the American flag at half staff on that day, as a symbol of patriotism, dignity, loyalty, and courage.

Accordingly, I call upon and authorize all departments and agencies of the United States and interested organizations, groups, and individuals to fly United States flags at half staff on October 23 in memory of the victims and in the hope that the desire for genuine peace and freedom will take firm root in every person and nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

Ronald Reagan