



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

January 14, 1977

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25X1A MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. [REDACTED]  
Director of Performance Evaluation  
and Improvement  
Intelligence Community Staff

FROM : Harold H. Saunders  
Director of Intelligence and Research

SUBJECT : Review of Field Reporting on the  
Disappearance and Deaths of Amba-  
sador Meloy and Embassy Officer  
Waring (Lebanon)

Thank you for forwarding a copy of and inviting my comments on the IC Staff review of the non-use of CRITIC procedures for reporting the disappearance and deaths of Ambassador Meloy and Embassy Officer Waring.

Clearly it would have been consistent with CRITIC reporting guidelines for the [REDACTED] and the Embassy in Beirut to have used CRITIC for the early reporting on these events. At the same time, recalling the conditions in Lebanon at the time, I believe the use of flash and EXDIS by the Embassy was also appropriate and justifiable.

As the IC Staff review and the CRITIC Handbook note, the essential element in the use of CRITIC is one of judgment--does the information require attention by the President or the NSC? In this case, the information in the Embassy cables was given to the White House immediately. The use of flash EXDIS instead of CRITIC did not preclude or significantly slow down this dissemination.

The problem was that because CRITIC was not used, the initial information was not in the hands of all members of the intelligence community and military commands simultaneously with its distribution to the White House and State Department decision makers.

I share the IC Staff's concern on this aspect of the non-use of CRITIC. But I believe we have to accept the

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State Dept. review completed

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idea that in some highly charged and sensitive situations, such as prevailed in Beirut, initial close control of dissemination of crisis information might override the admittedly important potential advantages of wider distribution. This is a judgment call on the part of the originator and the decision makers in Washington to be made on a case-by-case basis, and I urge that we not attempt to establish inflexible rules that would eliminate or seriously curtail the options of the man on the scene or the Washington leadership.

Your concern over the delay in the Department's distribution of the CRITIC Handbook is well taken. However, you will be pleased to know that the Department has just completed a review of its CRITIC procedures and the Handbook is now being sent to all posts as an annex to the Department's revised instructions.

S/S-O:APShankle  
INR/CIS:DRWahl:ajc

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