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LEBANON/
CIVIL CONFLICT

BROKAW: Every day since the massacre of the American Marines in Lebanon has brought still more questions. At the top of the list, why wasn't there enough security to keep the bomber out? And there were new questions today after it was disclosed that the Marines were warned that such an attack might happen. James Polk with details from Washington tonight.

POLK: For a full month before Sunday's attack on the Marine headquarters in Lebanon, U.S. intelligence sources received warnings repeatedly of a possible truck bomb assault on U.S. and French installations in Beirut. These intelligence warnings went unheeded, despite the earlier bombing of the U.S. Embassy. No extra security steps were taken. Barbed wire was the only barrier. The lone sentry at the first gate carried an unloaded rifle, Marines concede, and had no time to load and fire at the truck which crashed through. Today in Lebanon, the commander of the Marines, Colonel Tim Geraghty, said they were warned only two days before the attack that a car bombing was imminent. His explanation for inaction, 'We receive a lot of warnings. It is not uncommon.' More questions; who did it? President Reagan talking to a group at the White House yesterday. 'We now have sufficient evidence that Iranian terrorists were responsible and that they were aided, abetted, and supported by the Syrians.' Why so long to identify the dead and notify families? Most Marines slept without dogtags. Records were blown up with the building. Duplicate files had to be flown overseas. Why so long for the casualty office to announce a list the living? After digging out, it took time before tired troops could be mustered and counted. Even this is added to the uncertainty for families confused about where their Marines might be assigned when those names weren't missing from the list. Only 57 families have been notified so far of confirmed deaths. The total dead are 225, the worst American military loss under surprise attack in an undeclared war since Pearl Harbor. James Polk, NBC News, Washington.