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GRENADA/COUP

RATHER: House members argued today whether the U.S.-led invasion of Grenada was one of the nation's finest hours or a heat-of-the-moment over-reaction. But both sides of the House Foreign Affairs Committee voted overwhelming today to start the 60-day clock running under the War Powers Act requiring withdrawal of the U.S. troops within two months unless Congress says otherwise. As for why we are in Grenada and why we are part of the peacekeeping force in Lebanon, President Reagan speaks to those two issues in an address to the nation a little later tonight. White House correspondent, Lesley Stahl, has an advance look at the president's talk.

STAHL: The speech is described here as a reassuring report to the public on the steadiness of the president's foreign policy, both in the Middle East and Caribbean. On Lebanon, the president will reiterate his commitment to keeping the Marines in Beirut, announce new security precautions to prevent future incidents and link both Iran and Syria to the bombing of the Marine headquarters. But he's not expected to be specific about ways the U.S. might respond. On Grenada, the president will say again that the invasion was launched to protect American lives and pledge that the Marines will leave in a matter of weeks. There were twice as many Cubans in Grenada as the Pentagon had anticipated, and the President will declare, as his national security adviser did, that the invasion prevented a major Cuban military build-up. ROBERT McFARLANE (National Security Adviser): From the scan of things that have been discovered, we got there just in time.

STAHL: Government intelligence sources tell CBS News they now believe large numbers of Cuban troops, as many as two battalions, were sent into Grenada on the ship Vietnam Heroica shortly before the assassination of Prime Minister Bishop. The sources believe the Cubans were growing impatient with Bishop and sent the troops in to encourage the takeover and to build a Cuban military outpost. CBS News will broadcast the president's speech tonight at 8 p.m. Eastern time. Mr. Reagan was going to name his new Middle East Envoy tonight, but an official here said, 'We haven't gotten our choice to agree yet.' Speculation focused on Donald Rumsfeld, who was Secretary of Defense under Gerald Ford. Lesley Stahl, CBS News, the White House.