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LEBANON/
CIVIL CONFLICT

RATHER: After the Beirut bombings the United States took no retaliatory action. Now, as David Martin reports, that may change.

MARTIN: Senior administration officials tell CBS News the Pentagon has drawn up a list of targets in Lebanon to be bombed by U.S. aircraft in retaliation for terrorist attacks against American installations. The target list moves the U.S. one step closer toward adopting an Israeli-like strategy of immediate retaliation against terrorists. However, it is not clear whether the target list will be used to retaliate against today's attack since it took place in Kuwait and not in Lebanon. Pentagon officials are convinced none of the recent suicide bombings could have happened without the assistance of Syria. One official compared the situation to a tunnel with Iranians at one end and Americans at the other. 'Syria owns the tunnel,' he said. 'They can let people through, or they can stop them.' The target list includes Syrian positions in Lebanon and is intended to convince Syria to close the tunnel. U.S. officials say this is the man who could give the order. He is Rafat Assad, brother of Syrian president, Hafez Assad, and chief of Syrian intelligence. Once before the U.S. asked Rafat to head off a plot to bomb the American Embassy in Kuwait. That plot never materialized. It is too soon to know if Rafat is involved in today's bombing. But Lebanese intelligence has identified by name members of his organization involved in both the April bombing of the American embassy in Beirut and the October attack against Marine headquarters. The threat of suicide bombings has now spread to the U.S. There are already anti-aircraft missiles positioned around the White House. And now makeshift barricades have gone up at the White House and State Department after the FBI received an anonymous letter whose author claimed to have overheard Iranians plotting to blow up a building in downtown Washington. That warning was taken even more seriously after 800 pounds of TNT were stolen from this explosives dealer in New Hampshire late last month. Syrian backing gives Moslem fanatics in Iran a destructive potential they've never had before. The U.S. either can learn to live with its new threat as a price of doing business in the Middle East, or it can try going at least part-way to the source by attacking Syrian targets in Lebanon. David Martin, CBS News, the Pentagon.