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\$372 Million For Embassies' Security Sought

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The State Department said yesterday that it will seek \$372 million in emergency funds to improve embassy security throughout the world, and new details emerged from intelligence sources about apparent security lapses in Beirut before last week's terrorist bombing there.

State Department spokesman John Hughes said the administration will ask Congress to provide the funds in the next two weeks to build and strengthen barricades around embassies, buy more armored vehicles and accelerate construction of new embassies in high-risk areas.

The request is in reaction to the suicide truck-bombing of the U.S. Embassy annex northeast of Beirut in which there were as many as 92 persons killed or injured, according to the department's newest count. The bombing was the third successful attack against a U.S. installation in Beirut in the last 17 months.

It was learned yesterday that, just before last Thursday's attack, the Defense Intelligence Agency concluded that the annex was "highly vulnerable to surveillance, sniping, RPG [rocket-propelled grenade] and vehicular bombing."

The DIA also found that a nearby U.S. Marine residence is "an invitation to a terrorist attack due to its total vulnerability" and that the temporary embassy building in west Beirut is surrounded by high-rise buildings and "exceptionally vulnerable."

At the United Nations, President Reagan, calling the embassy annex bombing "a despicable act of barbarism by some who are unfit to associate with humankind," hinted

yesterday that the United States is trying to determine if the time is right for a new diplomatic attempt to end the Lebanon conflict.

House Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill Jr. (D-Mass.) said yesterday that the House will conduct an investigation of the bombing because the administration has provided "phony alibis and lame excuses."

The State Department also alerted embassies worldwide to a new threat by Islamic Jihad, the group that claimed responsibility for last week's attack. A Beirut newspaper reported that an anonymous caller claiming to represent the group said, "A big operation will be carried out against American interests soon."

Hughes said of the threat, "We take this seriously."

Hughes also revealed new details about the bombing, saying State Department investigators believe that the van that penetrated embassy security and blew up 20 feet from the annex contained only a driver and not, as first thought, a passenger.

The investigators, led by Robert Oakley, the department's coordinator for counterterrorism, reported to Secretary of State George P. Shultz yesterday.

Hughes said the investigative team also believes that the van was carrying the equivalent of 3,000 pounds of dynamite, more than earlier estimates. He said contract guards hired by the embassy fired at the van but Lebanese soldiers and, perhaps, police at the scene did not.

Asked if he were criticizing the Lebanese, Hughes replied, "I'm not making a judgment."

The DIA report had cited the contract guards and the "vacillating nature" of police, militia and Lebanese armed forces as among its chief concerns, according to those who have seen it and congressional sources briefed about it yesterday.

The DIA said that contract guards, from Christian militia in east Beirut and Moslem and Druze

militia in west Beirut, were hired with "limited investigation" and that their "continued loyalty and reliability in times of trouble" is "problematic."

Hughes said investigators "paid tribute" to guards for shooting at the van as it passed through an open gate and approached the annex. He said a British guard waiting for his ambassador to emerge from a meeting inside the annex also fired.

The DIA conducted its security review because it has responsibility for defense attaches and their teams in U.S. embassies. Its brief report, "High Threat Against U.S. Personnel and Facilities Continues," was completed just before the bombing and officials stressed on Capitol Hill that distribution of the classified document to State Department officials and a congressional committee is not tied to the attack.

The report noted that terraced hills overlook the annex, giving eavesdroppers or attackers the high ground. It also countered State Department arguments that the annex is in a safe neighborhood.

State Department officials had said they believed that the annex would be safer than the old embassy in west Beirut—destroyed by a car-bombing in April 1983—because it is in a Christian section. But the DIA noted that the annex is only about six miles west of Syrian-controlled territory and that, with the opening of the line that had divided Moslem west Beirut and Christian east Beirut, terrorists could move freely.

"Recent events have shown that such vulnerability... is open to swift and brutal exploitation," the DIA report said.

The report did not make any recommendations for improved security.

Reagan acknowledged Sunday that such security improvements as installation of a steel gate were in-

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