

READINGS IN SECURITY ASSISTANCE

current items of interest to security assistance managers

PRESIDENTIAL LETTER OUTLINING THE AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHIEFS OF MISSION

The following represents a reprint of a letter which President Reagan sent to all U.S. Ambassadors and Chiefs of Mission on 22 September 1981. The letter, which outlines their authorities and responsibilities, replaces the 25 October 1977 letter from President Carter. Clearance to reprint this letter for the general information of our readers was received from the Office of Legislative Affairs and Security Assistance, National Security Council, to whom we are indebted.

Dear Mr. (Madam) Ambassador:

I want to extend to you my personal best wishes for the success of your mission in [name of country]. As my personal representative there, you, along with the Secretary of State, share with me the responsibility for the conduct of our relations with [name of country]. I know we share a mutual conviction that carrying the American message of hope and freedom and advancing United States' interests abroad reinforces the foundations of peace. Together we are pledged to work for national strength and economic growth, and to promote the values undergirding our nation's unity and security.

I give you my full personal support as Chief of the United States Mission in/to [name of country] in the exercise of your strong statutory mandate under Section 207 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C 3927). I charge you to exercise full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all United States Government officers and employees in the country or organization to which you are accredited, except for personnel under the command of a United States area military commander, personnel under the authority of the chief of another United States mission (for example, one accredited to an international organization), or personnel detailed to duty on the staff of an international organization. I expect you to oversee the operation of all United States government programs and activities within that responsibility. I have notified all heads of departments and agencies accordingly, and have instructed them to inform their personnel in the United States and abroad.

So that you can ensure effective coordination of all United States government activities within your responsibility, I ask you to provide strong program direction and leadership of operations mission-wide. Please instruct all personnel under your charge: it is their duty to keep you fully informed at all times about their activities so you can effectively direct, coordinate and supervise United States programs and operations under your jurisdiction and recommend policies to Washington.

You will receive policy guidance and instructions from the Secretary of State, who is my principal foreign policy spokesman and advisor, or from me directly. I expect that you report with directness and

candor. I want to emphasize that the Secretary of State has the responsibility not only for the activities of the Department of State and Foreign Service but also, to the fullest extent provided by law, for the overall policy direction, coordination and supervision of the United States Government activities overseas. There may be developments or decisions on which personnel under your authority disagree. The Secretary of State and I will always welcome the opportunity to consider your recommendations for alternative courses of action, and policy proposals.

As you assume your duties, I know that you will do so with a strong commitment to impartial and equitable treatment of all United States Government personnel under your jurisdiction. Should any perceived inequities be amenable to elimination or mitigation by appeal to or negotiation with the host government, I urge you to pursue this course in a manner consistent with your authority and with international law and established customary practice. Recognizing that various agencies operate under different legislation and regulations, should you consider legislative or executive policy changes to be desirable in this connection, you should recommend such changes through the Secretary of State. Additionally, fair treatment of all United States Government personnel regardless of race, color, creed, sex or national origin epitomizes our belief in and adherence to the principles of equality of opportunity, a value and concept that form an important element of the American democratic tradition.

As Commander-In-Chief, I have authority over United States military forces. On my behalf you have responsibility for the direction, coordination, supervision and safety, including security from terrorism, of all Defense Department personnel in [name of country] except those forces under the operational command and control of a United States area military commander and personnel detailed to international organizations. Defense Attache offices, units engaged in security assistance, and other DoD components attached to your mission, as well as other Defense Department activities which may have an impact upon the conduct of our diplomatic relations with [name of country] fall within your responsibility.

It is imperative that you maintain close relations with concerned United States area military commanders and Chiefs of Mission accredited to international organizations. A copy of this letter is being disseminated to them. You must keep each other currently informed and cooperate on all matters of mutual interest. Any differences which cannot be resolved in the field should be reported by you to the Secretary of State: Unified Commanders should report to the Secretary of Defense.

I expect the highest standards of professional and personal conduct from all United States Government personnel abroad. You have the authority and my full support to take any action required to ensure the maintenance of such standards.

Your mission is to protect and advance the United States' interests abroad and you will receive the resources necessary to accomplish that mission. At the same time, I expect that these resources will be used in an effective and efficient manner, and that they will be directly and carefully related to priority policy and program activities. You should inform the Secretary of State when you believe that staffing of any agency is either inadequate or excessive to the performance of essential functions.

I am confident that you will represent the United States with imagination, energy and skill. You have my full confidence and best wishes.

Sincerely

Signed

Ronald Reagan