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PRIME MINISTER

LEBANON: ANNOUNCEMENT OF A CEASEFIRE

Australia welcomes the achievement of the written understanding among Israel, Lebanon and Syria to end the violence in northern Israel and southern Lebanon. I warmly commend the role played by the United States in helping to bring about this ceasefire agreement, and the contribution made by France and other countries.

The immediate task is to ensure that the ceasefire holds, and that the tragic events of the past few weeks do not occur again. We look forward to the early return to their homes of civilians on both sides of the border, and to the resumption of Lebanon's reconstruction programme.

The ceasefire provides the basis for renewed efforts to build a durable and comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East, in which Israel's security is ensured and the sovereignty of both Israel and Lebanon is fully respected. Australia will continue to support those efforts.

27 April 1996