

## Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate on the United States Reprisal Against Iran

October 20, 1987

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

At approximately 10:45 p.m. (EDT) on October 15, 1987, a SILKWORM missile fired by Iranian forces from Iranian-occupied Iraqi territory struck the SEA ISLE CITY, a U.S.-flag tanker, in Kuwaiti territorial waters. This action is the latest in a series of such missile attacks against targets in Kuwait, including neutral vessels engaged in peaceful commerce. It also is the latest in a series of acts by Iranian forces against the United States, as described in my letters of September 23 and October 10, 1987.

At approximately 7:00 a.m. (EDT) on October 19, 1987, Armed Forces of the United States assigned to the Middle East Joint Task Force, after warning Iranian naval personnel and allowing them to depart, attacked Rashadat Platform, an armed platform equipped with radar and communications devices which is used for surveillance and command and control. This platform, located in international waters, also has been used to stage helicopter and small boat attacks and to support mine-laying operations targeted against non-belligerent shipping in the Persian Gulf. It is now believed that this platform also was the source of fire directed at a U.S. helicopter on October 8, 1987. United States Navy ships fired upon and destroyed the platform. Additionally, U.S. forces briefly boarded another platform in the area, which had been abandoned by the Iranians when the operation began.

United States forces have returned to

their prior state of alert readiness in the Persian Gulf region. They will remain prepared to take any additional action necessary to protect U.S. forces, U.S.-flag vessels, and U.S. lives.

These restrained and measured actions by U.S. forces were taken at my specific direction in accordance with our inherent right of self-defense, as recognized in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, and pursuant to my constitutional authority with respect to the conduct of foreign relations and as Commander in Chief.

Since March 1987, I and members of my Administration have provided to the Congress letters, reports, briefings, and testimony in connection with developments in the Persian Gulf and activities of U.S. Armed Forces in that region. Additionally, congressional leaders were consulted on Sunday, October 18, 1987, concerning this operation. In accordance with my desire that the Congress continue to be fully informed in this matter, I am providing this report consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I look forward to cooperating with the Congress in pursuit of our mutual, overriding aim of peace and stability in the Persian Gulf region.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN

*Note: Identical letters were sent to Jim Wright, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and John C. Stennis, President pro tempore of the Senate.*