

Letter to the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate Reporting on United States Participation in the Multinational Force in Lebanon
September 29, 1982

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

On September 20, 1982, the Government of Lebanon requested the Governments of France, Italy, and the United States to contribute forces to serve as a temporary Multinational Force, the presence of which will facilitate the restoration of Lebanese Government sovereignty and authority, and thereby further the efforts of the Government of Lebanon to assure the safety of persons in the area and bring to an end the violence which has tragically recurred.

In response to this request of the Government of Lebanon, I have authorized the Armed Forces of the United States to participate in this Multinational Force. In accordance with my desire that the Congress be fully informed on this matter, and consistent with the War Powers Resolution, I am hereby providing a report on the deployment and mission of these members of the United States armed forces.

On September 29, approximately 1200 Marines of a Marine Amphibious Unit began to arrive in Beirut. Their mission is to provide an interposition force at agreed locations and thereby provide the multinational presence requested by the Lebanese Government to assist it and the Lebanese Armed Forces. In carrying out this mission, the American force will not engage in combat. It may, however, exercise the right of self-defense and will be equipped accordingly. These forces will operate in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, as well as with comparably sized French and Italian military contingents in the Multinational Force. Although it is not possible at this time to predict the precise duration of the presence of U.S. forces in Beirut, our agreement with the Government of Lebanon makes clear that they will be needed only for a limited period to meet the urgent requirements posed by the current situation.

I want to emphasize that, as was the case of the deployment of U.S. forces to Lebanon in August as part of the earlier multinational force, there is no intention or expectation that U.S. Armed Forces will become involved in hostilities. They are in Lebanon at the formal request of the Government of Lebanon, and our agreement with the Government of Lebanon expressly rules out any combat responsibilities for the U.S. forces. All armed elements in the area have given assurances that they will refrain from hostilities and will not interfere with the activities of the Multinational Force. Although isolated acts of violence can never be ruled out, all appropriate precautions have been taken to ensure the safety of U.S. military personnel during their temporary deployment in Lebanon.

This deployment of the United States Armed Forces is being undertaken pursuant to the President's constitutional authority with respect to the conduct of foreign relations and as Commander-in-Chief of the United States Armed Forces.

I believe that this step will support the objective of helping to restore the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Lebanon. It is part of the continuing efforts of the United States Government to bring lasting peace to that troubled country, which has too long endured the trials of civil strife and armed conflict.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN

Note: This is the text of identical letters addressed to Thomas P. O'Neill, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, president pro tempore of the Senate.

As printed above, this item follows the text of the President's letter as released by the Office of the Press Secretary.