

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  
August 30, 1983

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

On September 29, 1982, I reported to you concerning the introduction of United States Armed Forces in Lebanon to participate in the Multinational Force (MNF) requested by the Government of Lebanon. The presence of this Force was designed to 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 that had tragically recurred. I directed this deployment pursuant to my constitutional authority with respect to the conduct of foreign relations and as Commander-in-Chief of the United States Armed Forces.

We have periodically provided Congress with updated information on the activities of these forces and on the circumstances of their deployment in Lebanon. In light of recent events, I am providing this further report on the deployment, in accordance with my desire that Congress continue to be informed on this matter, and consistent with Section 4 of the War Powers Resolution.

On August 28, sporadic fighting between Lebanese Armed Forces and various armed factions took place in South Beirut; from time to time during the course of this fighting, positions in the vicinity of the Beirut airport manned by U.S. Marines of the MNF came under small-arms fire (without injury to U.S. personnel), and this fire was returned. On August 29, fighting erupted again. Marine positions came under mortar, rocket, and small-arms fire, with the result

that two Marines were killed and fourteen wounded. In addition, several artillery rounds fell near the U.S.S. IWO JIMA (an amphibious support vessel lying offshore), with no resulting damage or injuries. As contemplated by their rules of engagement, U.S. Marines returned fire with artillery, small arms, and, in one instance, rocket fire from a helicopter gunship. There were additional exchanges of fire earlier today, August 30, without injury to U.S. personnel.

Later today, a ceasefire came into effect in the area in which the Marines were deployed, and firing on Marine positions ceased. Diplomatic efforts are underway to extend this ceasefire. In the meantime, U.S. forces will be prepared to exercise their right of self-defense should such attacks recur.

I believe that the continued presence of these U.S. forces in Lebanon is essential to the objective of helping to restore the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Lebanon. It is still not possible to predict the duration of the presence of these forces in Lebanon; we will continue to assess this question in the light of progress toward this objective.

I will keep the Congress informed as to further developments with respect to this situation.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN

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