

Letter to the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate on the Deployment of United States Forces in Beirut, Lebanon

August 24, 1982

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

On August 18, 1982, the Government of Lebanon established a plan for the departure from Lebanon of the Palestine Liberation Organization leadership, offices, and combatants in Beirut. This plan has been accepted by the Government of Israel. The Palestine Liberation Organization has informed the Government of Lebanon that it also has accepted the plan. A key element of this plan is the need for a multinational force, including a United States component, to assist the Government of Lebanon in carrying out its responsibilities concerning the withdrawal of these personnel under safe and orderly conditions. This will facilitate the restoration of Lebanese Government sovereignty and authority over the Beirut area.

In response to the formal request of the Government of Lebanon, and in view of the requirement for such a force in order to secure the acceptance by concerned parties of the departure plan, I have authorized the Armed Forces of the United States to participate on a limited and temporary basis. 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 August 21, in accordance with the departure plan, approximately 350 French military personnel—the advance elements of the multinational force—were deployed in Beirut together with elements of the Lebanese Armed Forces, and the departure of Palestinian personnel began. To date, Palestinian personnel have departed Lebanon in accordance with the terms of the plan.

On August 25, approximately 800 U.S. Marines began to arrive in Beirut. These troops are equipped with weapons consistent with their non-combat mission, includ-

ing usual infantry weapons.

Under our agreement with the Government of Lebanon, these U.S. military personnel will assist the Government of Lebanon in carrying out its responsibilities concerning the withdrawal of Palestinian personnel under safe and orderly conditions. The presence of our forces will in this way facilitate the restoration of Lebanese Government sovereignty and authority in the Beirut area. Our forces will operate in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, which will have 2500–3500 personnel assigned to this operation, as well as with a total of approximately 800 French and 400 Italian military personnel in the multinational force. Transportation of the personnel departing is being carried out by commercial air and sea transport, and by land. According to our agreement with the Government of Lebanon, the United States military personnel will be withdrawn from Lebanon within thirty days.

I want to emphasize that 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. 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 take no action to interfere with the implementation of the departure plan or the activities of the multinational force. (The departure has been underway for some days now, and thus far these assurances have been fulfilled.) Finally, the departure plan makes it clear that in the event of a breakdown in its implementation, the multinational force will be withdrawn. Although we cannot rule out isolated acts of violence, all appropriate precautions have thus been taken to assure the safety of U.S. military personnel during their brief assignment to Lebanon.

This deployment of the United States Armed Forces to Lebanon 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.

This step will not, by itself, resolve the situation in Lebanon, let alone the problems which have plagued the region for more than thirty years. But I believe that it will improve the prospects for realizing our objectives in Lebanon:

- a permanent cessation of hostilities;
- establishment of a strong, representative central government;
- withdrawal of all foreign forces;
- restoration of control by the Lebanese Government throughout the country; and
- establishment of conditions under

which Lebanon no longer can be used as a launching point for attacks against Israel.

I also believe that progress on the Lebanon problem will contribute to an atmosphere in the region necessary for progress towards the establishment of a comprehensive peace in the region under Camp David, based firmly on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

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 Senator Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

The text of the letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 25.

Message to the United States Marine Forces Participating in the Multinational Force in Beirut, Lebanon

August 25, 1982

You are about to embark on a mission of great importance to our Nation and the free world. The conditions under which you carry out your vital assignment are, I know, demanding and potentially dangerous. You are tasked to be once again what Marines have been for more than 200 years—peacemakers.

Your role in the multi-national force—

along with that of your French and Italian counterparts—is crucial to achieving the peace that is so desperately needed in this long-tortured city.

I expect that you will perform with the traditional esprit and discipline for which the Marine Corps is renowned. Godspeed.

RONALD REAGAN

Nomination of K. William O'Connor To Be Special Counsel of the Merit Systems Protection Board

August 25, 1982

The President today announced his intention to nominate K. William O'Connor to be Special Counsel of the Merit Systems Protection Board. He would succeed Alex Kozinski, who has resigned.

Since July 1981 Mr. O'Connor has served as Inspector General of the Community

Services Administration. He served as Special Counsel for Interagency Coordination and Staff Director of the Executive Group Staff in 1980–1981. His duties included advising the Deputy Attorney General on policy, programs, and matters affecting the Executive Group. In 1978–1980 he was