

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 1, 1982

Dear Mr. President:

I have carefully considered your letter of June 25 on the crisis in Lebanon.

The current situation in Lebanon is indeed tragic and calls for the most urgent action on the part of all parties to end the bloodshed. This has been a central objective of the United States since the beginning of the crisis: we will continue to do everything in our power to promote the cause of peace. Indeed, the diplomatic efforts of the United States have been a decisive factor in keeping alive the possibility of a ceasefire in a political framework able to ensure a stable and peaceful future in Lebanon and the region.

I must therefore reject the suggestion in your letter that the United States has not actively taken advantage of every available opportunity, including the recent visit to Washington of Prime Minister Begin, to exert its influence for peace. I must also point out that your expressions of concern for the suffering of the people of Lebanon cannot but appear ironic in view of the fact that the Soviet Union has provided immense quantities of weapons to elements which have actively worked to undermine the political stability of Lebanon and provoked Israeli retaliation by attacking Israel's northern territories.

Mr. President, it is evident that we are at a watershed in the Lebanese crisis, originally precipitated in the 1970s by the influx of armed PLO forces into Lebanon. It should be

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obvious that peace in that war-torn country will be established on a secure basis only when the armed forces of all the foreign powers and movements are withdrawn and the Government of Lebanon is once again able to extend its effective authority throughout the country. This, in our view, is the central issue of the present crisis. In this context we will insist on the withdrawal of Israeli troops. We are not in favor of an extended Israeli occupation; neither, as we are assured by the Government of Israel, does it intend to maintain such a presence. It should be apparent, however, that there will be no return to a situation in which Israel's northern regions are subject to military aggression from Lebanese territory. This is a reality which those who have been responsible for such aggression must come to recognize.

Mr. President, it is now essential that all the parties involved take the hard decisions necessary to reach and implement such arrangements in order to end this tragic conflict. I will continue to use my personal influence to that end and expect that you will press a similar course on those forces with which the Soviet Union enjoys influence. Any other course of action would be inconsistent with the responsibilities of our two countries at this critical period.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

His Excellency
Leonid Ilich Brezhnev
President of the Presidium of the
Supreme Soviet of the Union of
Soviet Socialist Republics
Moscow