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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

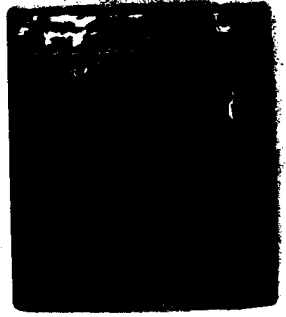
4/9/84

MEMORANDUM TO: DICK DARMAN  
FROM: JIM BAKER

*Comment*

The attached notes were written by the President. He would like to have them incorporated in some future speech, so could you please pass them along to the speechwriters for their information.

JAB



*copy*

Typed Copy Lebanon Information  
Written by the President

cc: Elliott



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

**TO:** James Baker

**FROM:** KATHY OSBORNE  
Personal Secretary  
to the President

**DATE:** 4-9-84

Attached is typed copy of  
Lebanon information which  
RR hand wrote -- per your  
request this morning. RR  
has original typed copy.

After a year and a half duty in Beirut, our Marines are coming home from Lebanon. They have known frustration and the pain of seeing friends and comrades die even though their mission was not intended to be one of combat.

They can't help but wonder if those friends died in vain and whether any of them were serving a useful purpose. There are those among us who, for their own reasons, are eager to answer in the affirmative; to add to the sorrow of widows, parents and children, and the pain of these men who are coming home.

These returning Marines deserve better. In the first place they lived up to the finest tradition of the Corps every moment they were there. They added lustre, not tarnish, to their motto, "Semper Fidelis." The goal we sought in that troubled place was worthy of their best and they gave their best. They were no part of our failure to achieve that goal. In the end, hundreds of centuries old were too much for all of us.

Let me, if I can, cut through the noisy rhetoric and explain the purpose of their mission. For as long as Israel has been a nation there has been a state of war between Israel and the Arab states. The Camp David accords and the statesmanship of Egypt's Anwar Sadat brought peace between Israel and Egypt. In the spirit of Camp David and U.N. Resolution 242, I proposed that the United States seek to bring about negotiations between Israel and other moderate Arab states to settle disputes and bring a general peace to the Middle East.

We were hardly underway with this plan when Lebanon caught fire. Lebanon, a nation created after WW II, had become the window on the Middle East, but in 1975 factionalism led to fighting

between the various ethnic and religious groups in the country. Added to this was a sizeable armed force under the P.L.O. which conducted terrorist operations from Lebanon against Israel.

Finally, Israel crossed the border into Lebanon to put an end to these attacks. The original purpose was to set up a defensive line some 25 miles inside Lebanon. Ultimately the P.L.O. forces retreated right into the heart of Beirut and a war was being fought there in the streets of the city. Civilian casualties were in the thousands.

Facing defeat the P.L.O. were afraid to surrender and an appeal was made for outside forces to oversee their total withdrawal from Lebanon. We, the Italians, French and subsequently the United Kingdom sent in a multi-national force and some 13,000 P.L.O. were put aboard ships and sent to a number of nations that had agreed to take them.

Shortly after that the newly chosen President of Lebanon was assassinated. His brother, the present President Amin Gemayel was elected by the Parliament to succeed him.

This brings us to the reason for the multi-national force. Syria had large forces -- eventually more than 50,000 men in Lebanon because of Israel's presence there. Israel and Syria had been at war 5 times. Each made statements that they would withdraw if the other did.

Put very simply we and our allies, the French, Italians and British agreed to help maintain order and stability in Beirut while the new government established itself. We provided, in addition to the Marines, an army training unit to help Lebanon have a capable military force. We also equipped that force with the

most modern weapons and equipment even including uniforms.

The plan was that as Israel and Syria withdrew, the Lebanese Army would move into the areas they had occupied to deal with the various militias that were warring among themselves. The multinational force would remain in Beirut keeping order. And they were doing this effectively. Our Marines drew the International Airport as part of their sector. It is Lebanon's doorway to the world, the only airport in Lebanon. It had been closed down because of the fighting. It re-opened under our Marine's protection.

It is almost impossible for us to imagine the savagery to which the people of Beirut had been subjected and what a change was made by our presence. A young woman sent me a letter her sweetheart had smuggled out with someone leaving Beirut. He told her of the terror and hardship when the fighting had been going on -- 17 days straight living in the cellar. Then he told of the difference our Marines had made. He added, without them there would have been a massacre of all the Christians in Beirut.

A woman wrote a letter to me that her daughter had only been able to go to school 2 out of the previous 8 years. She then wrote that because of our Marines her daughter could at last live a normal life.

During all this we were busy on the diplomatic front trying to persuade the dissident factions and the government of Lebanon to put together a broad based government giving the dissidents a voice. Ambassador Phil Habib was shuttling from Tel Aviv to Damascus to Beirut. When he had served above and beyond human endurance, Robert McFarlane took his place and recently Don Rumsfeld has taken the duty.

The Israelis began a phased withdrawal as they had promised and signed a peace agreement with Lebanon. Syria reneged on it's premise rejecting President Gemayel's request that they leave and denouncing the accord with Israel. Syria has made it plain they have territorial ambitions, something called a "greater Syria" encompassing Lebanon and, yes, Jordan and Israel. In the meantime they linked up with the dissident Lebanese militias and brought back radical P.L.O. forces. Syrian artillery as a visible threat was positioned within range of Beirut.

The multi-national force had been performing it's duty for the better part of a year and this was not to Syria's liking. Late last summer our allied force became the target. An Italian patrol suffered a grenade ambush. Then a car bomb was driven into our embassy taking a great many lives. Sniping at our Marines at the airport began taking a toll finally culminating in the tragic suicide bombing of our Marines with the terrible toll of 260 lives. A similar attack destroyed the French headquarters with a great loss of life.

Our men were told to fire when fired upon and they did so although numerous times when the fire came from civilian populated areas they restrained themselves rather than risk harm to innocent people.

The Lebanese government which would not exist had we not been there, cancelled the agreement with Israel under pressure from Syria. It is now meeting with and seeking a consensus with the dissident factions. We are willing to help diplomatically if we can but the purpose served by our military presence no longer exists. So we and our allies have disbanded the multi-national force.

We are going to try and get the original peace plan for the Middle East in motion. No, we didn't reach the goal we sought in

Lebanon but at least they are talking to each other for whatever it's worth and even that would not be taking place if we hadn't been there.

Yes, our Marines are coming home -- but only because they did all that could be done.

Semper Fi and God bless them.