

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 14, 1982

Dear Mr. President:

I have received your letter of July 7.

The suffering of the people inhabiting Lebanon, about which your letter speaks, is indeed tragic and requires most urgent action by all the parties involved to bring about the restoration of peace in Beirut and the rest of Lebanon. I do wish to call your attention, however, to the fact that the current fighting in Lebanon is the inevitable consequence of the violation in the 1970s of Lebanese territory by Syrian and PLO forces which established an armed presence there. These forces have divided the country into hostile, warring regions and used it as a base for aggression against Israel. The Israeli incursion of last month thus is one of the effects and not the cause of the tragedy.

The United States is hoping for a lasting solution of the problem. This objective demands, first and foremost, the removal of the armed forces of all the foreign powers and movements from Lebanon and the creation of conditions under which the Government of Lebanon is once again able to exert effective authority throughout its country. Any other interpretation of United States objectives and efforts in this region is without foundation. This holds particularly true with regard to the actions of my personal emissary in the area, Ambassador Philip Habib. Thanks in large part to his tireless and imaginative diplomacy an opportunity has been created for a peaceful resolution of the present conflict in Beirut. It is my firm resolve that the United States do everything in its power to help achieve such an outcome.

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BY smf, NARA, DATE 10/4/00

Discussions in Beirut have now reached a critical phase in which all parties involved must make the difficult decisions required for progress toward peace. In this context, the Government of Lebanon has raised the possibility of limited deployment of military units, including an U.S. component, to assist that government in reestablishing its authority in Beirut and facilitating the departure of outside armed forces from that city. As we have declared publicly, the United States would consent to such a deployment only at the express invitation of the Government of Lebanon and with the approval of the parties to the negotiations. If deployed in Beirut, U.S. forces would remain there only for the limited time necessary to accomplish the objectives I have described. These forces would then be withdrawn. This is not only morally sound policy; it is also a course dictated by prudence, for as experience shows, any attempt by outside powers to impose their military will on the people of the Middle East can only lead to such powers becoming bogged down in a bloody and humiliating quagmire.

Although the crisis in Lebanon is at an extremely sensitive stage, I want to take this opportunity to reiterate my deep concern about the situation in Poland. In our view, conditions in that troubled country have not improved since the imposition of martial law seven months ago. The United States and its Allies have made clear our considered view as to what is needed to bring about a process of national reconciliation in Poland. Without a significant improvement in the internal conditions of Poland, it will be all the more difficult to make the kind of progress I would like toward improved U.S.-Soviet relations. I urge you to help Poland return to the path of national reconciliation and peaceful development.

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Let me close, Mr. President, by expressing my concern at your decision to make public the substance of your letter of July 7, thereby breaching the confidentiality of our personal exchanges. This action cannot contribute to the easing of the current crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ronald Reagan". The signature is written in dark ink and is centered on the page.

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