

Box 2.1 Series of Presidential Statements Shows Change in Marines' Mission**Excerpts from President Reagan's Statements
on the Marines' Mission in Beirut**

Aug. 24, 1982, from a letter to the House speaker and Senate president pro tem:

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.

This step will not, by itself, resolve the situation in Lebanon, let alone the problems which have plagued the region for more than 30 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 for conditions under which Lebanon no longer can be used as a launching point for attacks against Israel.

Sept. 1, 1982, from a speech to the nation:

. . . I'm happy to announce that the U.S. Marine contingent helping to supervise the evacuation has accomplished its mission. Our young men should be out of Lebanon within two weeks.

May 17, 1983, from a news conference:

The multinational forces are there to help the new government of Lebanon maintain order until it can organize its military and its police and assume control over its own borders and its own internal security. So it could be that the multinational forces will be there for quite a period. . . .

Sept. 21, 1983, from a meeting with regional news media:

. . . The multinational force is there to help in this achieving of stability and control by Lebanon, and I think the mission still goes on. But from the very first, I said we will never send our men any place where they will not be allowed to defend themselves if they come under attack, and that recently has happened, and they have been defending themselves.

Oct. 24, 1983, from a meeting with regional news media:

If Lebanon ends up under the tyranny of forces hostile to the West, not only will our strategic position in the eastern Mediterranean be threatened, but also the stability of the entire Middle East, including the vast resource areas of the Arabian peninsula.

To the extent that the prospect for future stability is heavily influenced by the presence of our forces, it is central to our credibility on a global scale.

Source: Compiled by staff researcher Carin Pratt, *Washington Post*, October 25, 1983. © 1983 The Washington Post. Reprinted with permission.