

## **A “Call That I Have Resisted Making”**

**Date:** September 10, 1983

**Participant:** Ronald W. Reagan

**Participant:** Menachem Begin

**Start Time:** Unknown

**Place:** Situation Room

In a telephone call to Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin, President Reagan asked that the Israeli Defense Force delay its withdrawal from positions in Beirut, Lebanon. Israel had been in Lebanon since its invasion in June 1982 to oust the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Reagan had wanted Israel to remain in Beirut until the Lebanese army could handle itself in an ongoing civil war, but the Israelis would not grant this request, as their forces were already heading home.

**President Reagan:** —call that I have resisted making and did not want to make, and I know that—what has been taking place there. And the only reason I’m making this call now is because the situation has changed in the five days since you willingly agreed to delay, and we all had hoped that that’s all that we would have had to ask of you. But the—there’s been great progress along some lines there.

*End of excerpt 1.*

**President Reagan:** And I’m afraid with—at the instigation of the Syrians, we know enough, [*brief pause in the tape*] as I’m sure you know, that the Syrians are very much involved in all of this. And so here I am asking you the one thing that you ask—told me not to ask you and that is: Could you delay a few more days in that withdrawal until the gov—the army, the Lebanese army can free itself from Beirut and move into the Shuf?

*End of excerpt 2.*

**Menachem Begin:** I will get in touch with our Defense Minister any minute we finish. And then I’ll get in touch with you, because what I want to say now is that the two previous delays, which we accepted only because you asked us to do so, that we knew it will create resentment. It really created, especially the second one. As a result of this experience, I really express the hope [*unclear*] that we’ll not have to delay again.

*End of excerpt 3.*

**President Reagan:** And let me just say, Menachem, that these—this progress that has been made that I told you about, and it is definite progress, could not have been made if you hadn’t done what you did, and we’re all grateful for that. Because that gave us some—or gave *them* some time to make the achievements that I’ve just mentioned, and now . . . here I am, as I say, having to ask again, but I believe that the progress does warrant it—the change in the situation.

*End of excerpt 4.*

“Ronald W. Reagan, Moshe Arens, Menachem Begin, George P. Shultz, Unidentified Speaker, and Caspar W. Weinberger on 10 September 1983,” Cassette 1A, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [*The Presidential Recordings of Ronald W. Reagan*, ed. Kent B. Germany, Ken Hughes, Guian A. McKee, and Marc J. Selverstone] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014–). URL: <http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/4022319>