

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

February 28, 1994

Dear Senator Dole:

Having received your letter of February 8 on the passport and related restrictions on travel to Lebanon, I want to explain the results of the recent review of those restrictions. The United States continues to support the significant efforts of the Lebanese government toward reestablishing stability. However, the safety of Americans should remain our paramount concern. The steps outlined below would move to address some of your concerns, while keeping at the forefront the security of Americans.

There has been a pattern of terrorist actions against Americans in Lebanon for a long period of time. We continue to receive credible evidence that Americans are being specifically targeted by Hizballah and other groups hostile to the United States. The countries you mention in your letter have a generalized level of violence directed at their own citizens, or foreigners in general, which explains why those countries have travel advisories, as opposed to passport restrictions. The decision not to extend Temporary Protective Status to Lebanese nationals reflects a judgment that Lebanese are not endangered in their own country. That is not the case for U.S. citizens. Therefore, we have decided to extend the restriction on the use of the U.S. passport for travel to Lebanon.

However, we will do so for six months rather than for one year. This step will send an important signal to the Government of Lebanon and to the Lebanese-American community that we are serious about our policy of continuous review. During the six-month period, the Department of State will continue to monitor carefully the security situation to determine what, if any, further steps can be taken regarding modification of the passport restriction.

The Honorable
Bob Dole,
United States Senate.

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The Department of State will begin consultations with appropriate agencies on a number of aviation security issues. In cooperation with other agencies, we have already initiated reviews of the current situation, which indicate that aviation security in Lebanon remains a cause for concern. Nonetheless, these consultations may provide a framework for further discussions with the Lebanese government and, as appropriate, Middle East Airlines on U.S. government security concerns. Ambassador Hambley will pursue these issues in his discussions with Lebanese leaders.

We look forward to continuing our close cooperation on this issue and to the day that we can finally lift all restrictions on travel to a safe and stable Lebanon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Warren Christopher".

Warren Christopher