

Bush Reiterates Support for Moderation in Lebanon on Occasion of 25th Anniversary of Attack on Marin

Contributed by AFP Naharnet
Friday, 24 October 2008

U.S. President George Bush, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut, reiterated that his country strongly backs the voices of moderation in Lebanon.

"We reiterate our strong support for the voices of moderation and justice in Lebanon," Bush said in a statement on Thursday.

"We remember the 241 American Marines, soldiers, and sailors who lost their lives in that attack, and we pay tribute to their families and loved ones. The U.S. forces in Lebanon were serving as part of the Multinational Force working to bring peace and security to that country, torn by years of civil war," he said.

"On the anniversary of this unconscionable attack, we honor the memory of those brave servicemen and women through our commitment to succeeding in the war on terror. We express our gratitude to those serving abroad to protect America and promote peace and freedom around the world," Bush added.

His statement came as about 1,000 Marines and others at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina honored those who died when suicide bombers attacked the U.S. barracks in Beirut in 1983.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. James T. Conway told visitors on Thursday that none of the victims thought they would die on a mission for peace.

The attack was the deadliest single-day death toll in Marine Corps history since the Battle of Iwo Jima. It was the deadliest single attack on Americans overseas since World War II.

Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama also paid tribute to the victims.

"It is fitting that we meet today on the mall of the American Legion, surrounded by monuments to our nation's heroes," Obama said at the start of a campaign rally in Indianapolis.

"On this day, 25 years ago, the Marine barracks in Beirut were bombed. Two hundred-and-forty one Americans laid down their lives for this country and for the peace they were there to protect.

"We revere their service, we honor their sacrifice and we keep their families in our prayers. We will never forget them."(AP-AFP-Naharnet)

Beirut, 24 Oct 08, 05:21

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