

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

6 September 1950

Dear General Cates:

I sincerely regret the unfortunate choice of language which I used in my letter of August 29 to Congressman McDonough concerning the Marine Corps.

What I had in mind at the time this letter was written was the specific question raised by Mr. McDonough, namely the representation of the Marine Corps on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I have been disturbed by the number of communications which have been brought to my attention proposing that the Marine Corps have such representation. I feel that, inasmuch as the Marine Corps is by law an integral part of the Department of the Navy, it is already represented on the Joint Chiefs of Staff by the Chief of Naval Operations. That the Congress concurs in this point of view is evidenced by the fact that, in passing the National Security Act of 1947, and again in amending that Act in 1949, the Congress considered the question of Marine Corps representation on the Joint Chiefs of Staff and did not provide for it. It is my feeling that many of the renewed pleas for such representation are the result of propaganda inspired by individuals who may not be aware of the best interests of our Defense Establishment as a whole, and it was this feeling which I was expressing to Mr. McDonough. I am certain that the Marine Corps itself does not indulge in such propaganda.

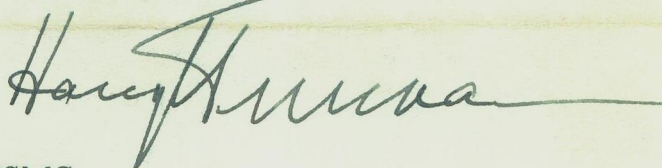
I am profoundly aware of the magnificent history of the United States Marine Corps, and of the many heroic deeds of the Marines since the Corps was established in 1775. I personally learned of the splendid combat spirit of the Marines when the Fourth Marine Brigade of the Second Infantry Division fought in France in 1918.

On numerous occasions since I assumed office, I have stated my conviction that the Marine Corps has a vital role in our organization for national security and I will continue to support and maintain its identity.

I regard the Marine Corps as a force available for use in any emergency, wherever or whenever necessary. When I spoke of the Marines as the "Navy's police force", I had in mind its immediate readiness, and the provision of the National Security Act which states that "The Marine Corps shall be organized, trained, and equipped to provide fleet marine forces of combined arms, together with supporting air components, for service with the fleet in the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign."

The Corps' ability to carry out whatever task may be assigned to it has been splendidly demonstrated many times in our history. It has again been shown by the immediate response of the Marine Corps to a call for duty in Korea. Since Marine ground and air forces have arrived in Korea I have received a daily report of their actions. The country may feel sure that the record of the Marines now fighting there will add new laurels to the already illustrious record of the Marine Corps.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Harry Truman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

General Clifton B. Cates, USMC  
United States Marine Corps  
Washington, D. C.