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LETTER DATED 21 MARCH 1978 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In my report to the Security Council of 19 March concerning the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), it is stated that the contingents of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon will be selected in consultation with the Security Council, and with the parties concerned, bearing in mind the accepted principle of equitable geographic representation. As I informed the Council in my statement on the evening of 19 March, I have been in touch with a number of Governments in all the different geographical regions with a view to ascertaining their willingness to provide a contingent for UNIFIL. For the Asian region I have received a positive response from Nepal, and for Western Europe I have received an offer of a contingent from Norway. I have also received an offer of a contingent from the Government of France, which has informed me that its contingent would be available for immediate service.

I shall continue my contacts to secure other contingents in order to ensure equitable geographic representation and will report to the Council on further developments.

I have also contacted the Governments of Austria, Iran and Sweden with a view to gaining their assent to the use of detachments from their contingents already in the Middle East to serve temporarily as an advance guard for UNIFIL. The Government of Iran has given its consent.

It is urgently necessary that elements of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon should arrive in the area as soon as possible. For this reason, I wish to inform the members of the Council of my intention, subject to the usual consultations, to accept the offers of the Governments of France, Nepal and Norway, as a first step in establishing the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon in the area. I hope to be able to station detachments of the Austrian, Iranian and Swedish contingents already in the Middle East to join the above-mentioned three contingents as an advance guard of UNIFIL.

In view of the urgency of the situation and if the Council expresses no objection, I intend to proceed with the above arrangements forthwith. I shall of course undertake the other necessary consultations.

(Signed) Kurt WALDHEIM