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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
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Letter dated 6 March 1986 from the Permanent Representative of
Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Government of Israel categorically rejects the misrepresentations made by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon in his letters addressed to you dated 18 and 21 February 1986 (A/41/170-S/17840 and A/41/174-S/17860).

On 17 February 1986, two Israeli soldiers were abducted while a convoy was passing through a security zone established in southern Lebanon. On 22 February, after six days of searching in southern Lebanon for these soldiers, the units of the Israel Defense Forces involved in the search returned to their bases. The Israel Defense Forces' search operation was precisely that and nothing more. Israel has no territorial interests in Lebanon. My Government's sole concern is that Lebanon should not serve as a launching ground for terrorist attacks against the towns and villages of northern Israel.

Given the lack of an effective central authority in Lebanon and the continuing state of anarchy and chaos there, the only way for Israel to ensure the safety of its citizens is to co-operate with local Lebanese, those in South Lebanon equally committed to preventing the resumption of terrorism through the maintenance of a security zone that adjoins Israel's border. On the whole this zone has acted as a highly effective buffer against attempts by Hezbollah fanatics and other terrorists to infiltrate Israel.

In its search for the two abducted Israeli soldiers, the Israel Defense Forces acted in line with their long-standing policy of going out of their way to protect the lives and well-being of their men. In several of the Lebanese villages, authorities of the Israel Defense Forces uncovered large quantities of military

* A/41/50.

A/41/204
S/17902
English
Page 2

supplies, including Katyusha rockets, explosive devices and light arms, that were to be used for terrorist strikes against Israel. Some of these arms were found in the possession of Hezbollah - the fanatical Shiite group that is believed to be responsible for the abduction of the two soldiers.

The Hezbollah makes no pretence of confining its attacks to Israeli military targets in Lebanon. It openly proclaims its intention to attack civilian targets in Israel, indeed to destroy Israel altogether and to "march to Jerusalem". Nor does it limit its attacks to Israel alone. Its victims have included nationals of France, Spain, the United States and the Soviet Union. Thus the world's leading powers find themselves at the mercy of a small band of fanatics inspired and backed by the Khomeini régime and operating with apparent immunity out of the Syrian-controlled areas of Lebanon. Preventing further spread of international lawlessness from this source should concern the entire international community.

I have the honour to request that this document be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 37 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Benjamin NETANYAHU
Ambassador
