



Security Council

PROVISIONAL

S/PV.2707
22 September 1986

ENGLISH

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTH MEETING

held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 22 September 1986, at 4 p.m.

President: Mr. BELONOGOV

(Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics)

Members:

Australia
Bulgaria
China
Congo
Denmark
France
Ghana
Madagascar
Thailand
Trinidad and Tobago
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Venezuela

Mr. WOOLCOTT
Mr. TSVETKOV
Mr. LI Luye
Mr. BALE
Mr. BIERRING
Mr. de KEMOULARIA
Mr. GBEHO
Mr. RAKOTONDRAMBOA
Mr. KASEMSRI
Mr. ALLEYNE
Mr. AL-SHAALI

Sir John THOMSON
Mr. OKUN
Mr. AGUILAR

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the Security Council.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

The meeting was called to order at 4.30 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- (a) SPECIAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON (S/18348)
- (b) LETTER DATED 18 SEPTEMBER 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/18353)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): In accordance with the decision taken at the 2706th meeting, on this item, I invite the representative of Israel to take the place reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Netanyahu (Israel) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Fakhoury (Lebanon) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Al-Atassi (Syrian Arab Republic) took the place reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The first speaker is the representative of Israel. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. NETANYAHU (Israel): First, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. In the time that you have held the post, we have already witnessed your excellent performance. I extend my congratulations also to your predecessor for an equally skilful performance.

The Security Council is now debating the future of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in the light of the Secretary-General's report. There is also already a draft resolution that has been presented, or circulated, based on that report. I regret to say that the report is unbalanced, that it distorts the true picture of the present situation in South Lebanon. Having said that, I must add that the report suffers from a major omission: it does not fully present Israel's position or our assessment of the situation in South Lebanon - a position and an assessment that we have stated repeatedly both in private and in public. They are in contrast to, for example, paragraph 21 in the report, which quotes Syria as blaming Israel for and as being the source of the current problems. Naturally, we have a different view of who is to blame. If for no other reason than simple fairness, this view should have been presented as well in the report.

Now, what is the thrust, the gist, of the report? What does it really say? What it says, essentially, is this: UNIFIL is attacked because Israel maintains a security zone along its border with Lebanon; if Israel were to dismantle the security zone and if UNIFIL were to deploy down to the international border, the attacks would stop or - I think this is the implication - they would be significantly curbed.

I suggest that we examine these assumptions. What is the source of the present crisis in which UNIFIL finds itself? Where are most of the recent attacks coming from? Who is behind them? We know where they are not coming from. They are not coming from moderate Shiites in South Lebanon. Overwhelmingly, they are coming from and originating from one source: the Shiite terrorist organization known as Hezbollah.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Now, the next question is this: Who stands behind this so-called "Party of God", this organization whose name we first heard when it assumed responsibility - that is putting it too mildly; I should say when it boasted of its responsibility - for murdering American and French peace-keepers in Beirut, for bombing the United States Embassy, for kidnapping and executing the innocent nationals of half a dozen countries, many of them represented around this table. Do I really have to spell it out? Does anyone here have any doubts as to who finances, organizes, equips, inspires and motivates this group? The address is in Tehran. But that is not the only address: there is another one, nearer to us; that second address is in the Muhajerin Palace - the Presidential Palace - in Damascus.

I want to ask each representative here a simple question: how was this pernicious offspring of the Khomeini revolution introduced into Lebanon in the first place? Hezbollah was imported into the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon as a co-production of Iran and Syria. Its first mission was to act as a sub-contractor for Syria. Syria's strategic aim in Lebanon at the time was to drive out the multinational force, the peace-keepers, from Beirut, and Hezbollah was to serve - and indeed did serve - as a spearhead for that effort, in the attacks that I have mentioned. Needless to say, Iran was an enthusiastic partner in this perfidy.

But Hezbollah had from the start a wider and longer-range mission. That mission was to turn Lebanon into a Khomeini-style "Islamic Republic". One of Hezbollah's leaders, Sheikh Mohammed Yazkar, has summarized it most succinctly, I think. He said in Baalbek on 2 September - only recently:

"The only decisions we respect are those of the sword and blood. We will create a new Islamic Lebanon. We believe only in the leadership of Khomeini and we will carry out all his commands".

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

For that to happen, the first - I would say the central - position that has to be dominated is naturally Beirut. But here we come to a paradox: The objectives of Syria and Iran began to clash at that point. The presence of Hezbollah in and around the Beirut area became too close for Syrian comfort. That was one of the reasons why Damascus felt compelled to reintroduce its soldiers into the Lebanese capital.

So the question then arose: What do you do with Hezbollah? And the solution was very simple: What you do with Hezbollah is to divert its efforts, its attention and its energies to an arena in Lebanon where the interests of Iran and Syria do not so readily clash - and that arena is, of course, South Lebanon.

Thus Hezbollah shifted its attacks to the south. Particularly, it has been directing these attacks against UNIFIL. This is, of course, perfectly in line with Khomeini's policy of driving out from Lebanon what he calls all "alien" forces - and what he means, first of all, is all Western forces - as a prelude to the establishment of an Islamic Republic.

While Hezbollah attacks the Western presence as a whole, it has targeted the French more than others. I do not think that I have to spell it out, but Iran has many axes to grind, not all of them relating to Lebanon; many of them relate to France. When it comes to the broader animosity to France, Hezbollah's clergy fully conform to Iran's policy. I would refer to the issue of 22 August 1986 of the Lebanese magazine Wattan al Arabi, in which two of Hezbollah's leading clergymen, Sheik Hassan Trad and Sheik Nasserallah, are quoted as calling for "revenge" against France and as citing special religious dispensation permitting the killing of Frenchmen at every opportunity. The French of course are the largest contingent in UNIFIL. If they are attacked, if they are weakened, if they can be driven out, the odds are - at least in the view of Hezbollah - that the whole force would collapse, that they could bring about the complete collapse and withdrawal of UNIFIL and thereby assist the complete predominance of Hezbollah in the South. In

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

any case, the central point is very clear: UNIFIL's precise deployment is absolutely irrelevant to that objective. Anyone who claims otherwise either is misinformed or has an ulterior motive.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

I just got on the wire a concurring view from two United Nations officials. One is a senior United Nations official speaking on condition of anonymity who said, in Reuters today, that "the attacks in south Lebanon were carried out by an ad hoc alliance between the Shiite Moslem Hezbollah group, backed by Iran, and radical factions in the Syrian-backed Amal organization". The speaker actually chose to be quoted by name - Major Dag Leraand of Norway, spokesman for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). He said that, in his view, there was a clear link between the terrorist bombings in France and the rash of attacks against French peace-keepers in south Lebanon. He told reporters: "All the attacks appear to be aimed at removing the French presence from Lebanon."

In addition to the expulsion of Westerners, Hezbollah pursues another objective in south Lebanon quite separate from the one I have described. It views the area as a forward staging ground for carrying out a holy war against the very existence of the State of Israel. I could give a great many sources on this, but I shall cite only one. Sheikh Fadlallah - everyone here recognizes his name - is a leading figure in Hezbollah. On 4 July in An Nahar he said the following:

"We are not fighting Israel because it occupies the south of Lebanon, but because it occupies Palestine and presents a danger to Islam and to Arabdom."

Now in this particular goal, in this particular thrust, Hezbollah eliminates any conflict between Iran and Syria. Of course Syria has had a long-standing tradition of waging war by proxy, for example, by using terrorists based in Lebanon to attack various enemies world wide. Now when it comes to Syria's war against Israel, or its attacks against Israel, south Lebanon is for Syria the pre-eminent staging ground for proxy terror attacks against us.

So the interesting question is, given that the sponsors agree, how does Hezbollah view UNIFIL in this context of the holy war against Israel? Well, by its own statements it very clearly sees UNIFIL as an obstacle to this campaign against

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Israel. It is another force that stands in the way of direct attacks against the north of the country - and the leaders of Hezbollah say this openly. A few weeks ago - on 28 August - they assembled in Baalbek with the attendance, significantly, of the Iranian Ambassador to Syria, and they issued the following declaration:

"We categorically reject the structure of resolution 425 (1978) by the Security Council. It gives the right of security arrangements to the Zionist enemy. We shall fight UNIFIL, which blocks our military effort against Israel."

Another quote is by Abdel Moussa Mahane, another Shiite leader, in the Voice of Lebanon of 15 September:

"The presence of UNIFIL in south Lebanon serves the interests of Israel and its intelligence agencies."

Also from the Voice of Lebanon on the same day, Sheikh Maher Hammoud is quoted as follows:

"In south Lebanon there is a UNIFIL unit with 25 dogs trained to sniff out explosives. This means that the unit does not defend us but, on the contrary, it acts in the interests of Israel. UNIFIL should not stay in south Lebanon."

There are many other sources saying the same thing: UNIFIL has to go; it has to go because it defends Israel - Israel proper, the State of Israel below the international boundary.

So what better evidence can there be to demonstrate the true goals of Hezbollah? And I ask: Can anyone here seriously argue that UNIFIL's precise deployment makes the slightest difference to these people? Well, actually, I would argue that. I would argue exactly that. I would argue that, since Hezbollah totally rejects resolution 425 (1978), since it sees UNIFIL as a buffer, as a defender, against the State of Israel, then we can ask: How would it view UNIFIL were it to deploy down to the international border? And this is the recommendation made in the Secretary-General's report and these are the recommendations that are

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

floating around this table that will probably be presented formally. How would Hezbollah - the people who are making these attacks - view UNIFIL if it were to follow the recommendations made in this Council?

I think we can take them at their word. They will see UNIFIL on that fence as if physically defending Israel itself, and the attacks would not recede. They would intensify; they would dramatically increase; they would make the present situation, as unfortunate and tragic as it is, pale by comparison.

So what I have been arguing up to now is that it is not the security zone which has caused the attacks against UNIFIL, and it is not the deployment of the Force southwards to the border that will prevent them.

That is not saying enough, because the consequences of following the recommendations in the report and the other recommendations that have been discussed and will be discussed here are far more severe, even more severe than the attacks on UNIFIL. I think we have to ask what would happen in the south if the present arrangement in the security zone were to be abandoned. What would happen are more hostilities, more bloodshed, more suffering - on both sides of the border. The basic problem in Lebanon has always been the absence of a central authority that is able to prevent lawlessness and terror. This terror is the same terror that spilled over from the horrific civil war in Beirut in 1975 and 1976 to south Lebanon - the spill-over that preceded the establishment of UNIFIL by years. In fact, it was the accumulation of such terrorist attacks that compelled us to act in south Lebanon in 1978 in order to roll back the terrorist wave.

It was this Council that at that time requested that Israel withdraw its forces. We did and UNIFIL was established. My colleague, Ambassador Blum, who is here, remembers that day. So the problem dates back to that period. What happened was that we got out, and UNIFIL got in and so did the terrorists. Led by the PLO they quickly returned and built up a tremendous infrastructure. They did this

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

because there was no Lebanese Government capable of blocking them; and they were unhampered by UNIFIL, despite its best intentions and despite its many sacrifices. The fact is that they were able to do this, and these relentless attacks that issued from this infrastructure - by land, by sea and even by air - eventually forced us to act again, in 1982. By 1982, if you had been an Israeli citizen living along that border, your children would not have been able to go to school and you would have been living literally underground, in shelters. I do not think anyone here would have recognized any semblance of what anyone of us would call normal life along our side of the border, not to mention the suffering of Lebanese civilians on the other side.

So we had to act, and we destroyed that terrorist infrastructure. In January 1985, in accordance with a government decision, we withdrew our forces from Lebanon and set up the existing security arrangements. What has been the effect of these security arrangements on south Lebanon as a whole - not on UNIFIL but on south Lebanon? I do not mean the Israeli side of the border, which I have just visited, which is safe, where normal life has been resumed and where one simply cannot recognize what used to go on there before. I mean the Lebanese side of the border. As paradoxical as it sounds, given the chaos raging everywhere else in Lebanon - the ping-pong of car bombs in Beirut every week or so and the other killings that go on - South Lebanon is now relatively the safest place in Lebanon. Over the past few months - the summer months - we have had an influx of 30,000 people, many of them Shiites, Lebanese civilians coming to the south.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Now that these incidents have occurred, the Council and the Secretariat have been pressing us to abandon the measures that we have set up that have guaranteed this relative tranquillity. In the past year they said, why do you not take a small risk? Try it in a limited area and let us see what happens. So we did.

In July 1985 we agreed that UNIFIL would assume control of a small area of three villages in the security zone - Jmei-Jmei, Majdal Sulum and Shakra - but on one basic condition: that UNIFIL should see to it that that area did not become a launching ground for attacks against us. I regret to say that that condition was not fulfilled. The Shakra triangle has become the most active base for terrorist attacks against Israel. We have seen there a sharp rise in rocket-firing and ground and other types of attack. This is what we can expect across the entire international border if we follow the present recommendations. That area would immediately fill up with Hezbollah - and, I think I can safely predict, PLO - once we dismantled the security zone.

What would happen is that south Lebanon and the north of Israel would again face an intolerable situation. And, as always happens with an intolerable situation, terrible violence would once again be unleashed - something that no one here, least of all Israel, desires.

We are not going to lend our hand to that calamity. We shall continue to do what is necessary to protect the lives and safety of our citizens. That is our goal, our only goal, vis-à-vis Lebanon. We are prepared to work with any party in Lebanon that is genuinely interested in securing peace for that area.

UNIFIL, too, has tried to assist in the attainment of this objective. It has suffered painful casualties in the process. Although we did not request UNIFIL's

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

establishment, everyone in Israel shares the grief of the bereaved families and their Governments. However, we cannot, and must not, expect UNIFIL to defend Israel. That was never and cannot be UNIFIL's purpose.

The decision regarding UNIFIL's future, therefore, does not rest with us; it is clearly the responsibility of the Security Council. But, as the Council debates this question, it cannot be deflected by abstract proposals, however politically convenient they may be. It must be guided by reality; it must be guided by the facts on the ground as they really are. And some of the suggestions and proposals that have been made here remind me of somebody who throws a dart at random and then proceeds to paint the bull's eye around the dart. Well, the dart should be aimed elsewhere: the dart should be aimed at Hezbollah.

I do not think that the fear of continued terrorism, or perhaps another political agenda, should deflect us from our main task, and the Council's main task is to place Hezbollah and its patrons in the dock. They should be here; they should be accused. Israel is not responsible for the present violence in south Lebanon. The authors of the various reports know that very well, as do the members of the Council, many of whom have freely admitted it in private conversation.

What Israel expects of this Council is clear-cut, explicit condemnation of Hezbollah and its Syrian and Iranian patrons - unambiguous and unqualified condemnation. Blaming Israel instead, asking it to dismantle the only viable defence against these fanatic killers, would be more than an injustice: it would be cowering before terrorism and ensuring its expansion.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I thank the representative of Israel for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Lebanon, on whom I now call.

Mr. FARHOURY (Lebanon) (interpretation from Arabic): For eight and a half years Lebanon has made it clear that it supports the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and has called on the members of this Council individually and collectively to shoulder their responsibility and enable UNIFIL to carry out its mandate under Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978). Lebanon has always affirmed and continues to affirm that complete, unconditional and immediate Israeli withdrawal is the only solution to the explosive situation in the south.

The latest report of the Secretary-General has resulted from the grave situation faced by the international Force. The report is completely in accordance with Lebanon's position and viewpoint. My delegation appreciates the continued serious efforts made by the Secretary-General and his assistants aimed at ensuring the full implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Council.

Israel's continued intransigence and insistence on occupying a part of Lebanon's territory not only threaten the safety of the international Force but also its future and that of the south, as well as the peace and security of the whole region. The attacks launched against the international Force, from whatever quarter they emanate, have always been very strongly condemned by Lebanon, which continues to condemn them.

Lebanon consistently affirms its concern for the Force's safety, its desire for its presence and its appreciation of the Force's leaders and personnel. Lebanon consistently affirms its gratitude to all the troop-contributing States for the noble sacrifices made by the respective contingents.

In these serious circumstances, Lebanon again requests all the members of the Council to reaffirm their support for UNIFIL and adopt all the measures necessary

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

to ensure its safety and enable it to carry out its mandate. Lebanon reiterates its full readiness to contribute, within the limits of its capacity, to the achievement of these vitally important objectives.

We have great confidence in the Council and its ability to overcome Israeli defiance to which daily expression is given by Israeli officials through their refusal to withdraw from the south, their opposition to the deployment of international forces up to the internationally recognized boundaries, their insistence on holding on to the so-called security zone and their support for the so-called south Lebanon army.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

The latest expression of this defiance was given yesterday by the Israeli Defence Minister, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, after a Cabinet meeting. According to the latest information available to us, transmitted today by Agence France Presse, the Israeli army has consolidated its military positions in the eastern part of the security zone with 12 175 mm field guns deployed in the town of Eben es Saq, 1 km from the headquarters of the Norwegian contingent. A number of Israeli soldiers have taken up position in the area of Jezzin, north of the security zone, for the first time since the Israeli withdrawal from that area in 1985.

Lebanon rejects any attempts to justify the continued Israeli occupation of a part of Lebanese territory and its support for puppet militia. Lebanon warns that this Israeli challenge is extremely dangerous, for it can only be met by Lebanese determination to liberate the land, since that is a national duty. It is a sacred right exercised by the Lebanese people, in common with the other peoples that have resisted occupation and made sacrifices for their territorial integrity and security.

My delegation, while insisting on the need for the adoption of the report of the Secretary-General to ensure the safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and of effective measures to enable it to fulfil its mandate, calls upon all members to take today a unanimous decision so that they may not individually or collectively bear the responsibility for the failure of this most important peace-keeping operation. Such failure would have a negative effect on the prestige of the United Nations and of the Security Council in particular. The price of such failure would be paid by Lebanon with its sovereignty and the people of Lebanon would pay that price with their security and safety.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

The tragedy has lasted for too long; the sacrifices have been too many and too great. It is high time for the people of Lebanon to return to a life of freedom, dignity, security and peace.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received a letter from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, dated 22 September 1986, which reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request that, during the Council's discussion of the item presently on its agenda, the Security Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to His Excellency Mr. Clovis Maksoud, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations."

This letter will be circulated as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/18358. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation to Mr. Maksoud under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure.

Since there is no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Maksoud to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MAKSOUD: Mr. President, I should like to express my deep appreciation and thanks to you and, through you, to the Council for having extended the invitation to me.

I should like to say at the outset that we wish to associate ourselves with the congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and, needless to say, what has been said about the strength of the friendship and co-operation that exist between your great country and our Arab nation.

(Mr. Maksoud) .

I take this opportunity also to extend our deep condolences and regret to the various members of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) who have fallen victim in recent days to assaults that we consider to be illegal.

The issue of the south of Lebanon assumes particular importance at this time, and it is perhaps a good omen amidst this tragedy to find the Security Council trying to focus, as the report of the Secretary-General has indicated, on what is really rendering the situation in south Lebanon unstable and volatile and the country open to further victimization.

Israel decided long ago that the south of Lebanon was an arena for the settling of big accounts in a small area. Therefore, throughout the south of Lebanon and the so-called security zone, it wants to create a situation in which the central authority of Lebanon is unable to exercise sovereignty over its own territory.

Furthermore, at a time when Lebanon, through its various parties, is taking genuine steps towards national reconciliation, we in the League of Arab States believe that those steps would be further reinforced and consolidated if the Government of Lebanon were able to deploy its authority and its army with the assistance of UNIFIL in the south of Lebanon, because that would constitute a leverage for enhancing the chances and opportunities of national reconciliation.

(Mr. Maksoud)

What is it that Israel intends to do in this area? We have heard Israeli delegations often stating that Israel withdrew in 1978. I put these questions before the members of the Security Council. Did Israel withdraw after its invasion in 1978? Did Israel allow UNIFIL to be deployed and to carry out its mandate fully in 1978? Did Israel not hand local authority to a group of rebels under the leadership of Saad Haddad in order to keep the central Government of Lebanon off balance and unable to exercise its authority in part of its territory? Did it not provide logistical support, financial support, political support, informational support and intelligence support to the rebellious militias that acted as mercenaries for the Israeli Army in South Lebanon?

Did Israel withdraw in 1985 as we have just heard? Did it withdraw, or did it provide logistical support, military support, intelligence, information and financial support to the same rebellious militias defying the authority of the Lebanese Government, under the pretext of a continued security zone? Is it not time we looked into this means whereby Israel maintains in the south of Lebanon continuous control, directly and vicariously? I ask that because Israel has no intention of total withdrawal, because the accounts it wants to settle in South Lebanon, as I have said, are many. Principally, it wants to undermine as often as possible the credibility and effectiveness of United Nations resolutions and mechanisms.

What is this security zone? Security from whom and security for whom? When the Defence Minister, Mr. Rabin, says that he arrogates to himself the right to extend the security zone to parts further to the north of that zone, is this not saying that Israel is arrogating to itself ex cathedra the right to defy the United Nations, the right to further occupation, the right to extend further its authority, under the pretext of a so-called security zone?

(Mr. Maksoud)

Israel did not withdraw. Israel has disabled the United Nations forces in the carrying out of the mandates of this Council in 1978 and in 1986. Israel, in order to deflect the attention of this Council, in order to buy more time to consolidate further its occupation, its defiance and its contempt, is saying that the report of the Secretary-General is "unbalanced". What is a balanced report? Does a balanced report give a position equidistant between what is right and what is wrong? Is a balanced report an attempt to factor in the view of one who violates the mandate of the Security Council that he has an equal right to that of the victim of aggression? The use of the term "unbalanced" is an attempt to thwart the international community's ability to focus on the real issue in the south of Lebanon.

We have heard a harangue against Hezbollah. In 1978 there was no Hezbollah, but there was an Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon. In 1985 Israel did not withdraw. That made it inevitable that the population of southern Lebanon would rise up and make the Israeli occupation costly. That is the prescription for legitimate resistance. However, legitimate resistance does not at all, in any circumstances, warrant killing UNIPIL elements. That is why the Government of Lebanon and all the Arab League members have condemned such wanton killing. On the other hand, as we all know, the mainstream of resistance to Israeli occupation complements and supports the role, the objectives and the mandate of UNIPIL.

The Security Council at this particular moment is called upon to render its resolutions implementable, to make it costly for anybody who defies the United Nations resolutions and mandates, because, without making it costly, without a penalty for violating the Security Council resolutions, defiance will become built in, as it is built into the behaviour pattern and the policies of Israel towards southern Lebanon.

(Mr. Maksoud)

As for the various accusations about Hezbollah, Iran and Syria, all these are rhetorical statements intended to deflect attention from the real causal factors which the report of the Secretary-General has focused on and pinpointed.

Our position is this. Where does the mandate of the Security Council rest? How can it be carried out? How can we enable the central authority of Lebanon to retrieve the sovereignty of Lebanon and to carry out its international and national commitments? The obstruction of the mandate of UNIFIL and the obstruction of Lebanon's ability to carry out its national and international responsibilities on its international borders must be attributed squarely to Israel's built-in defiance of the mandate of the Security Council and to Israel's contempt for its resolutions and moral imperative.

At this moment when Lebanon, as I stated earlier, is beginning to recover from the tragic decay it has been experiencing, at a time when Lebanon is retrieving its national unity, when the dialogue among the various parties is achieving certain palatable results, when the world is conscious of the trauma that Lebanese feel - at this particular moment we look upon UNIFIL as one of the great leverages that could help this process of national cohesion to be achieved expeditiously.

(Mr. Maksoud)

Yet, as we have seen since 1978, security zones are a prescription for recklessness, and that is why the discussion and debate on the future of UNIFIL at this particular moment is of utmost priority - not only for the sake of Lebanon, for the retrieval of United Nations credibility, for the effectiveness of its mandate and for the future of Lebanon, but also to a very large extent for the future of stability and peace in the region as a whole.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I thank Mr. Maksoud for the kind words he addressed to me.

Sir John THOMSON (United Kingdom): Mr. President, your country and mine do not see eye to eye on every question, but I know that we share a great respect for the authority of the Security Council and a determination to uphold it, and I know that you will use all your many skills and talents to do that. I congratulate you on becoming President.

We all have had, over a long period, much experience of the skill, wit and legal abilities of your predecessor, who was a most effective President of this Council.

I had no intention of speaking when I came into the Chamber this afternoon, and I do so extemporaneously. Before I come to the main question I wish to raise and perhaps to answer, I would like to say something that I am sure is in the hearts of most and perhaps all people here and express our deep condolences to the French and Irish delegations, and very particularly to the families of those gallant soldiers who have been killed in southern Lebanon.

I want to go on and express praise for those countries which have contributed troops to UNIFIL. They have been ill-treated, they have been ill-paid, and they have not received the credit due to them. They are in a very difficult position, and we should not forget, as we today debate and talk glibly of UNIFIL as though it was an abstract body, that it is in fact composed of something like 7,000 men,

(Sir John Thomson, United Kingdom)

and those men and their families must be very anxious today.

As I have said, I speak unpremeditated, and in doing so I reserve my right to intervene again later in this debate.

I speak because I am stimulated to do so by the question raised by the Ambassador of Israel: is the precise geographical position of UNIFIL relevant? I hope I quote approximately correctly. Well, I think the answer to that question depends rather on what you are applying it to. It seems to me, at the risk of being mistaken or forgetful, that there are four facts that we are facing. One is that the men of UNIFIL are being attacked and killed today, and as far as we can tell, and we believe this to be the truth, they are not being attacked by Israelis and not being killed by Israelis; the second fact is that Israel is illegally occupying part of southern Lebanon; the third is that the Government of Lebanon does not have effective authority in the area; and the fourth, which may affect people there less than it does us, but it is nevertheless important for us, is that in consequence of this situation the Security Council's decision, its reputation and the effectiveness of the whole United Nations peace-keeping operation is called into question. Indeed I think the situation is serious enough to say that it is in danger.

Now, if I apply the question raised by the Ambassador of Israel to these four facts, I find different answers. To the first, the question whether UNIFIL's precise geographical situation is relevant to the attacks presently being carried out on UNIFIL, the answer is, I think, leaving aside a lot of history we have heard, in present terms "no". I think UNIFIL would be being attacked by the people who are attacking it largely irrespective of its exact geographical location. That is not to say that there are not causes for the situation that has arisen. But if we are looking at the situation today, I do not think the attacks would have been avoided by UNIFIL's being in a different position.

(Sir John Thomson, United Kingdom)

But when we come to the first of the next three facts, Israel's illegal occupation of part of southern Lebanon, it is of course very relevant. And I do not think the Israeli Ambassador really addressed that point. When we come to whether the Government of Lebanon has or has not - and I think it has not - effective authority in South Lebanon, it is again relevant, though not wholly relevant; it is not the only reason why the Government of Lebanon does not have effective authority. And when we come to the fourth fact, the danger to the Security Council's authority and the future of United Nations peace-keeping, I think it is relevant again.

So it is a question that is susceptible of different answers. And this suggests to me that there is no one answer to the difficult situation that we face in southern Lebanon, and by "we" I mean this Council. We cannot find just one thing to do which will suddenly transform the whole situation and restore it to what we would wish it to be, and I have in mind primarily resolution 425 (1978), the first operative paragraph of which calls for "strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries."

(Sir John Thomson, United Kingdom)

That, surely, is the heart of the matter. That, surely, is what the Security Council has called for. That, surely, is what the Council wishes to reaffirm and to bring about, if possible. But I think it is not only one action that has to be taken to produce this; it is not only one capital but many that will have to act.

Therefore, I would say that it is necessary for the Government of Israel to act as called for in resolution 425 (1978); but that is not the only action that is necessary in order to give effect to operative paragraph 1 of that resolution.

I think that the Security Council will have to face up to the very sad fact that we are confronting an extremely complicated situation. I do not know quite what we are going to do about it. But three statements have been made here this afternoon that have all had force, that have all provoked thought. It is against that background that I found myself being provoked into making this spontaneous statement. I repeat that I reserve the right to make another one.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for the kind words he addressed to me.

The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. AL-ATASSI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): Before exercising my right of reply, I wish to extend to you, Sir, the representative of the great Soviet Union, my delegation's friendliest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Your great country, of which the Syrian Arab Republic is proud to be a friend, has proved through its international political conduct that it always stands by the causes of peoples struggling for their freedom and independence. Your country's relations with other States are based on mutual respect, and it

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

deals with them on a footing of equality. My delegation has complete confidence that you will guide the Council's work with wisdom, objectivity and sincerity.

I must also take this opportunity of expressing our great appreciation to your predecessor in the Chair for the skilful way in which he guided the Council's work last month.

Now, what I had expected all along has happened. Indeed, my delegation had not intended to speak on a question that is within the competence of the Government of Lebanon, which, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), is to extend its authority over the territory occupied by Israel.

Moreover, since the Security Council is meeting to consider the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), I had not intended to speak. The representative of Lebanon has given a detailed account of the ongoing events in South Lebanon and has described the Israelis' daily brutality against Lebanese. That should have spared me the need to speak.

But earlier in this meeting we heard a statement that was based on a distortion of facts and on fabrications. It was made by the Zionist representative in his attempt to divert the attention of the members of the Council from the main question - in conformity with his usual practice. That has made it necessary for us to make a statement in reply to his fabrications.

At the outset, on behalf of my delegation I extend our sincere condolences to the families of the French and Irish soldiers who have been the victims of treachery while, as the representative of France said the other day, they were carrying out peace-keeping duties under the flag of the United Nations.

I wish also to express our great appreciation to the Secretary-General and his assistants - in particular, Mr. Goulding and Mr. Aimé for the efforts they are

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

making in dealing with the crisis confronting UNIFIL in South Lebanon, and for the objective report they have submitted to us following the recent visit to the area by Mr. Goulding.

It is only natural and logical that this report is not to the satisfaction of the Israeli representative, who in his statement described it as "unbalanced". It certainly is not to the satisfaction of his Government either, because in it accusations are explicitly levelled at Israel for its responsibility for what is happening in South Lebanon as a result of the perpetuation of Israel's occupation, in contravention of the letter and spirit of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

We heard the representative of Israel today calling into question the report of the Secretary-General and expressing doubts about its accuracy and credibility. The truth is that our objectives clash with those of the Israeli forces of invasion. That is where the clash is - not with the objectives of any other party.

Our objective is well known: to preserve the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Lebanon. We have expressed this objective in our statement condemning the attacks against the United Nations Force. On the other hand, the objective of occupation can only be destruction, murder and violation of independence and sovereignty.

In this connection, I wish to read out the following statement by an official Syrian source in regard to the assassination of the French military attaché in Beirut:

"The Government of Syria heard with the greatest distress and sorrow the news of the assassination of the French military attaché in Beirut. It

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

condemns this act and similar acts against the United Nations Force, particularly the French contingent thereof. It denounces such attacks and any further ones against the French, in view of France's balanced position on the crisis in the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict".

It is not surprising that the accused should try to divert attention from proven accusations against him by levelling accusations against other parties that have nothing whatever to do with them.

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

That is what the representative of Israel did today when he tried to spread fabrications and trumped-up charges against my country. I need not clarify what is already clear in the Secretary-General's report to the effect that what is happening in south Lebanon is the result of the continued Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory in contravention of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for Israel's withdrawal to the internationally recognized border. However, I should like to instil the following facts in the mind of the representative of Israel. The heroism and sacrifices witnessed by south Lebanon are an expression of the will and determination of that people to put an end to Israeli occupation. These heroic acts and sacrifices have commanded the admiration and assistance of the peoples of the world, including the people of my country, which is bound to the Lebanese people with the unity of destiny and the unity of struggle against a common enemy. Also, if the Israeli representative and his Government of terrorism and murder believe that the establishment of a security zone on Lebanese territory and the recruitment of puppets and mercenaries, such as Badad and Lahad, may protect the northern border of their country, they are badly mistaken. Past experience has proved the contrary, and resistance to occupation knows no borders. Further, levelling false accusations against other States and other parties is an injustice to the heroic resistance waged in south Lebanon.

The solution is clear: full and complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory up to the internationally recognized border and deployment of UNIFIL in Lebanon up to that border, where the Force can play the role originally assigned to it, that of restoring international peace and security. That is the solution; it is not the solution I propose but the one that is stated by the Secretary-General in his report, which did not satisfy the representative of Israel.

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

The reference to my country by the representative of Israel is proven false by the Secretary-General's report. Allow me to quote paragraph 21, which, as he indicated a while ago, did not satisfy him:

"The Syrian Government also expressed unequivocal support for resolution 425 (1978) and for UNIFIL. Syrian leaders attributed the blame for the current state of affairs to Israel's refusal to withdraw its forces. They too urged that the Security Council should assume its responsibilities in this matter. They repeated their support for the position of those in Lebanon who had expressed their determination that, if Israel withdrew its forces and dismantled the 'security zone', there should be no return to the situation that had existed in the area before 1982." (S/18348, para. 21)

Having examined the clear report of the Secretary-General, my delegation is convinced that the Security Council should, after holding Israel fully accountable for the continued deterioration in the security situation in south Lebanon, compel Israel to withdraw up to the international border in such a manner as to spare the struggling people of the south murder and destruction and UNIFIL the dangers besetting it as a result of the continued occupation of the south by Israel. We are also fully convinced that the action of the Council will not be thwarted, as it has in the past by the United States exercising its right of veto with regard to everything regarding Israel in the Council. Once more, let us give the United States of America another opportunity to expiate its past sins and heed the will of the international community represented in the Council.

We call upon the Council to force Israel, the occupying Power in south Lebanon, fully to implement resolution 425 (1978) and withdraw its forces beyond the internationally recognized border.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for the kind words he addressed to me.

The representative of Israel has asked to speak. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. NETANYAHU (Israel): The reason why we are meeting today and not in January is because something has happened in the field that has prompted the Council's convening now. In January, the Council has to meet to consider the larger questions relating to UNIFIL - the question of its mandate, the question of the next prolongation of its mandate, and so on.

The reason we are here today is because there are attacks on the ground now - accelerated attacks, a small war that is being waged against UNIFIL, directly targeting UNIFIL, especially its French contingent. And the reason we are addressing this issue today is because we have to address it. I tried to point out what everybody here knows, that these attacks are coming from a particular source with a particular agenda that does not address itself to the specifics and the calibrations and the details of the mandate, but to its very existence and the very existence of UNIFIL.

There was only one speaker - our colleague from the United Kingdom - who in a sober contemplation addressed this question among the other questions he raised. If we wish to discuss the immediate crisis, we have to focus on the immediate problem, and the immediate problem stems from Hezbollah.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Since other matters have been raised here, I should like to address them quickly.

The Ambassadors of Syria and Lebanon - perhaps we shall hear from the Ambassador of Libya as well - and Ambassador Maksoud spoke loftily of the "central authority of Lebanon" and "the sovereignty of Lebanon that is being violated". What central authority? What sovereignty?

I should like to ask a simple question about south Lebanon. When was the last time that the President of Lebanon visited the south of Lebanon? How many times in the past few years has the Minister in the Lebanese Cabinet responsible for the south visited south Lebanon? Where is that authority displayed? Is it displayed in the Bekaa Valley, where there are Iranians and Syrians? I should ask our Syrian colleague how many Syrians: 25,000 or 35,000? I lose count; it fluctuates daily. Some 25,000 Syrian troops occupy the country? Is it in Tripoli, which is virtually a wholly-owned Syrian port? Is that where the authority and sovereignty of Lebanon can be found? Or perhaps along any other port along Lebanon's coastline? Every one of these ports is controlled by a different sect. They are little - I do not want to call them republics - enclaves, controlled by separate sects which exercise effective control over those areas, including an outlet to the sea.

Perhaps we can find the authority and sovereignty of Lebanon in Beirut and its capital. I truly regret to say that is the last place one can find it. One cannot find them there because that city is divided, not just in two major sectors battling and warring with one another, but in many other sectors within sectors - sects fighting sects, tribe against tribe, faction against faction. It is very difficult to point out a single place in Lebanon, let alone the capital or part of it, where the ostensible central authority exercises that authority; it simply does not exist.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

I said that a minute ago with regret, because that is the source of our problems. It is not our activities in the south that have led to the loss of Lebanese authority; it is the absence, the total absence, of such authority that has led to our activities. It is exactly the opposite. Those problems cannot be solved until the problem of Beirut and some sort of central authority can be established.

I listened carefully to Ambassador Thomson's statement in which he said "We do not know what the solution is to the the larger problem". Frankly, I do not know what the solution is either, because we cannot solve the Lebanese puzzle. We cannot put together Lebanon that fought a civil war 10 years ago in which it killed a large percentage of its citizens. We cannot create something that is not there. It is up to the Lebanese to do it. It would be useful, of course, if the Syrians withdrew and rescinded that fond embrace that has led them on many occasions to state their intention to have Lebanon fully annexed into the Syrian domain.

I think that, ultimately, those questions are beyond the Council's purview, because they will be decided on the ground, in Lebanon itself.

In the absence of that central authority, there is a simple fact about Lebanon which I have mentioned. There are many factions and many militias - that is Lebanon. We can talk from now to eternity about a Central Government in Beirut; however, owing to its absence, that void is filled by local militias. Yes, we operate with one of those militias; yes, we assist them. But they assist themselves: they do so and risk their lives, not because they want to protect Israel, but because they want to prevent the return of terror to the south - and that is the most legitimate activity by any Lebanese that I can see in the cauldron of chaos that exists today in Lebanon.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

If we are to have a serious discussion about both the present crisis and point towards a larger discussion that may or may not occur in January - it may occur before that - it simply will not do to repeat the old statements about resolution 425 (1978), about Israeli dismantling of the security zone, and others as a kind of magical incantation which, if endlessly repeated, will somehow affect in any measure the true sources of this problem. It is viewed as a panacea, but it will solve nothing. It will, I am afraid, create a new chaos with which we are not even familiar today.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I call on the representative of Lebanon in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. FAKHOURY (Lebanon) (interpretation from Arabic): It seems that the memory of the representative of Israel is very short. The President of the Republic of Lebanon visited the south last year immediately after the liberation of Sidon from Israeli occupation. He was warmly and popularly received there by all the parties. I want to remind the Ambassador of Israel of that. Many ministers also visited the south last year and this year.

The second point raised by that representative relates to attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). It is true that since 11 August UNIFIL has been the target of attacks, which we have condemned and still condemn. However, these attacks are not the first of their kind. The international forces numbering 130 who have fallen are not all victims of the attacks starting on 11 August last. In the past attacks have been launched by the Israeli Army, Israeli agents and the so-called South Lebanon Army. It seems that the Israeli Ambassador forgot the abduction of 30 soldiers of the Finnish contingent not so long ago by Israeli agents in Lebanon.

How is it he forgets what the Israeli Army did when it invaded Lebanon in 1982 and violated regions under UNIFIL? The answer to that question is well known.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

The third point we went back to is the question of Lebanese authority in the south. Who is responsible for the absence of Lebanese authority in the south? Is it not Israel which has occupied the south? Last year, did not the Lebanese Government send a contingent of the Lebanese army, to be deployed in Kawkaba, which came under attack by Israel and the agents of Israel.

I simply wanted to recall those points. Some members of the Council would not think that what the Ambassador of Israel said was true - not 100 per cent, not even 1 per cent.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): There are no further speakers inscribed in my list for this meeting.

The date for the next meeting of the Security Council to consider the item on the agenda, will be determined during consultations among members of the Council.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

