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2212th MEETING

Held in New York on Sunday, 13 April 1980, at 1.15 p.m.

President: Mr. Porfirio MUÑOZ LEDO (Mexico).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Bangladesh, China, France, German Democratic Republic, Jamaica, Mexico, Niger, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Tunisia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zambia.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2212)

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. The situation in the Middle East:
Letter dated 10 April 1980 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/13885);
Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (S/13888)

The meeting was called to order at 1.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East:

- Letter dated 10 April 1980 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/13885);
Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (S/13888)

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform the members of the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Lebanon in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the debate without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Tuéni (Lebanon) took a place at the Council table.

2. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Council is meeting today in response to a request from the representative of Lebanon, which is contained in a letter dated 10 April addressed to the President of the Council [S/13885]. The members of the Council also have before them the special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) [S/13888].

3. I now call upon the Secretary-General, who wishes to make a statement.

4. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The situation in UNIFIL, which has been extremely tense for the past week, yesterday deteriorated in such a way that I felt it my duty to inform the Council and to ask its assistance in bringing to an end the intolerable aggravation and harassment which the Force is experiencing.

5. My special report to the Council, dated 11 April, gives the developments in the area up to Friday 11 April.

6. On Saturday 12 April the situation developed as follows. At 1350 GMT all outgoing telephone lines from UNIFIL headquarters were reported to have been cut. At 1400 GMT small-arms fire started to impact on the operations building of UNIFIL headquarters. Shortly thereafter, the firing spread to the following areas: the main compound, the guard contingent, the French Engineer platoon, Italian helicopter wing and Norwegian medical company. Between 1623 and 1838 GMT, a total of 85 rounds of artillery, mortar and tank fire impacted within the UNIFIL headquarters area, including the medical company compound. All artillery and mortar fire came from *de facto* forces' positions on the coast north of Naqoura. Firing stopped at 1840 GMT after UNIFIL informed the Israel Defence Force Liaison Officer that, unless the firing ceased, UNIFIL would fire on known *de facto* forces' gun positions in the area. The cessation of fire coincided with the arrival of the Israeli Major-General Ben Gal at Rosh Hanikra. During the firing one UNIFIL soldier suffered injuries.

7. Following is a summary of damage caused to UNIFIL headquarters and property in Naqoura. All four helicopters were seriously damaged and rendered unusable by mortar and small-arms fire. The maintenance hangar was partially damaged and about 80 per cent of the helicopter spare parts were de-

stroyed. Ten vehicles, including fire-fighting equipment, were partially damaged by mortar shrapnel. Two long-range radio sets and some other communication equipment were damaged by artillery and mortar shrapnel. Serious damage was caused to the camp plumbing and electrical system, with the auxiliary power severely damaged. Fifteen prefabricated buildings were completely destroyed, and three concrete buildings were partially damaged, by mortar and artillery fire. Serious damage was caused to some contingent-owned equipment of headquarters units and Force reserve supply stores, such as refrigerators, clothing, bedding and personal equipment. I should add that this material damage is very high and that the most serious consequence is the loss of medical evacuation capability by helicopter, because in fact helicopters provide our only possible means of evacuating wounded people.

8. At 1255 GMT the Irish battalion was informed by the *de facto* forces that the latter were holding five Irish personnel as hostages and, if any UNIFIL action in the At-Tiri area led to *de facto* forces or civilian casualties, they would take action against the Irish personnel.

9. Between 1255 and 1455 GMT, the Irish battalion reported a fire-fight between UNIFIL troops and the *de facto* forces in the At-Tiri area, which was initiated by the latter. As a result, one Fijian soldier was seriously injured and later died. One member of the *de facto* forces was observed being taken away, presumably dead; three wounded and four *de facto* forces personnel were captured; and the village was taken over by UNIFIL troops. At 1505 GMT, Major Haddad sent a message to the Force Commander, General Erskine, stating that because of the firing by UNIFIL troops at At-Tiri, he would not be responsible for the safety of UNIFIL soldiers or the acts of reprisal that would be carried out against the Force.

10. At 2103 GMT the Irish battalion reported that they had lost radio contact with one of their positions in the enclave. A United Nations observation post in the enclave later reported that the four Irish soldiers of that position had been taken away by the *de facto* forces. At 2116 GMT Major Haddad met with the Force Commander in Naqoura and since that time the Irish battalion area has been quiet but very tense.

11. A meeting between UNIFIL, Israeli and *de facto* forces personnel was held at UNIFIL headquarters at Naqoura at 2216 local time on 12 April. The Force Commander, Israeli General Ben Gal and Major Haddad were present. General Ben Gal proposed that prisoners be exchanged, that UNIFIL remove the Force Reserve from At-Tiri and that it permit Major Haddad to recover his damaged half-track from At-Tiri. UNIFIL agreed that as soon as all *de facto*

forces left At-Tiri, it would withdraw the Force Reserve from the village. The participants agreed that all concerned would meet again on the afternoon of 13 April. A further report is expected after that meeting.

12. On 11 and 12 April UNIFIL observed the Israel Defence Force leaving positions near the village of Kunin, in the Irish battalion area, and west of Markabe in the enclave. However, UNIFIL is unable to confirm the extent of the withdrawal, as its freedom of movement in the enclave is severely restricted.

13. I am extremely conscious of my responsibilities as regards the United Nations peace-keeping force in southern Lebanon. I need hardly recall to members of the Council that it was the Council which in March 1978 made the decision to station that force in the area [resolution 425 (1978)]. Nor do I need to recall to members of the Council the extreme difficulties and dangers to which UNIFIL has been subjected right from the beginning.

14. My recent report [S/13691 of 14 December 1979] gives details of the kind of harassment and abuse to which the Force is exposed daily. I wish to emphasize that throughout its existence UNIFIL has exercised the maximum restraint, even in its right to use force in self-defence. However, soldiers cannot be expected indefinitely to put up with harassment, abuse and violence in carrying out the duties entrusted to them by the Council.

15. I am also very conscious of the position of the Government of Lebanon in regard to recent developments, a position that has been clearly stated by the representative of Lebanon, Ambassador Tuéni, in his letter to the President of the Council of 10 April [S/13885].

16. I wish to state here my warm appreciation to the Governments which have provided the troops for the Force and for their support in these very difficult times. I also wish to state my admiration and gratitude to the Commander, the officers and the men of the Force for their steadfast conduct in the face of very great difficulties. I am also appreciative of the efforts made by a number of Governments in recent days to bring their influence to bear on the situation in such a way as to de-escalate the recent very dangerous developments.

17. In conclusion, I hope that the members of the Council will consider what can be done to bring this situation under control and to make it possible to proceed with the full implementation of resolution 425 (1978) and other relevant resolutions.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.