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LETTER DATED 11 DECEMBER 1978 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF LEBANON TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

1. I am writing to express, once more, my Government's profound appreciation for your superb leadership of the Security Council on UNIFIL and the interim report of the Secretary-General (S/12929), both during the public debate and in the private consultations. We also know what efforts you have personally deployed to create a consensus around a President's statement that was so balanced and, therefore, so difficult to write.

2. May I add a final word of thanks for the support which my country, Lebanon, found so forcefully expressed in your address to the Council as representative of the Federal Republic of Germany. Your reiteration of the policy of the EEC as stated at the United Nations by H.E. Dr. Hans Dietrich Genscher, your Minister for Foreign Affairs, was a significant contribution to the debate.

3. My delegation would also pray Your Excellency to transmit Lebanon's gratitude to the Council as a whole, and particularly to the distinguished representatives who found it possible to speak for the full implementation of resolution 434 (1978) in support of the efforts deployed by the Secretary-General, the members of the Secretariat and the Commanders and men of UNIFIL.

My Government feels further assured that the statement of 8 December 1978 will weigh considerably, both diplomatically and in the field.

We feel confident that "all those not fully co-operating with UNIFIL, and particularly Israel" will take very seriously the Council's call upon them to "desist forthwith from interfering ... and comply fully without any delay with the implementation of resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978)".

Indeed, a continued "defiance" of the Council's authority will have, and should have, the most serious consequences.

4. We also feel that Israel, and all concerned, will as well take very seriously the Council's call "upon Member States that are in a position to do so to bring their influence to bear on those concerned, so that UNIFIL may discharge its responsibilities unimpeded".

The Government of Lebanon hopes that this letter shall be interpreted as an invitation to all that no effort should be spared - over and above what has been and is being done - to obtain substantial changes in the area of operation of UNIFIL before the end of the present mandate and further deterioration of the situation and erosion of United Nations credibility.

5. In this respect, my delegation feels that particular attention must be drawn to paragraph 15 of the Secretary-General's report (S/12929), where reference is made to a "response" being awaited concerning "detailed suggestions for further deployment of UNIFIL which would greatly improve its control in its area of operation and its capacity to protect all elements of the civilian population".

I presume that the distinguished representative of Kuwait, Ambassador Abdallah Bishara, was referring to this specific point, as well as to the over-all Israeli withdrawal, when he asked for the floor in exercise of his right of reply and addressed specific questions to the Israeli representative.

My delegation feels that it has to bring it to the attention of the Council and the members that the Kuwaiti Ambassador's questions remained unanswered. Instead, the Israeli representative chose to sidetrack the issue and pursue a debate which was totally irrelevant and where I chose not to follow him, for reasons that, I believe, are clear to the Council.

May I note with satisfaction that we thought that the Council was indeed very helpful when no members allowed that we lose our point of focus.

As the Council undoubtedly remembers, the cease-fire in Beirut had already been dealt with through resolution 436 (1978) of 6 October 1978, which also called for "national reconciliation", and the "preservation of Lebanon's independence, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity". Our determination to do so - I thought - was sufficiently emphasized in my statement to the Council, and no debating of this, there and then, would have served the cause of peace or fostered UNIFIL's ability to implement resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978).

6. In the light of the above-mentioned points, my delegation felt that your, the Council's, and the members' individual attention must be drawn to the negative attitude of the Israeli representative, that particular notice must be made of this and that action should therefore be initiated to obtain the proper "response" that the Secretary-General is asking for.

I will not permit myself to pretend to indicate what that action should be. But some expression of support to the Kuwaiti Ambassador's question might be indeed relevant and most effective. I am sure that the Council would, in due course, want to be informed of the answer.

In so far as Lebanon is concerned, may I, if this can be helpful in any way, reiterate my Government's commitments as stated in my address to the Council and ask that they be taken into consideration within the framework of any action that may be contemplated by yourself, the Secretary-General or those members who have,

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so far, done so much in trying to facilitate the deployment of UNIFIL and give the Forces their political support.

7. I feel that my letter will be incomplete if I do not make specific mention of the continued efforts of the United States Government, which has continued to feel particularly responsible for the implementation of resolution 425 (1978), which it initially sponsored.

Special mention must also be made of the diplomatic efforts of the troop-contributing Governments, under the leadership of France.

These efforts acquire now, we think, after the President's statement of 8 December, a further dimension and greater leverage.

8. May I, in conclusion, reiterate my deepest thanks to you and all the members and ask you to please inform the Council of this letter by circulating it as a document, since the Council has decided to remain seized of the question and expressed its desire to be constantly informed of all developments before 19 January 1979.

(Signed) Ghassan TUENI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
