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PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE  
UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON

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Strength and composition of the Force

1. As of 8 April 1978 the strength of the Force was as follows:

Canada - 19 (temporarily detached from UNEF)  
France - 728  
Iran - 198 (temporarily detached from UNDOF)  
Norway - 629  
Sweden - 225 (temporarily detached from UNEF)

2. In addition, 68 military observers of UNTSO assist UNIFIL in the performance of its tasks.

3. Arrangements have been concluded to airlift the Nepalese battalion (about 650 all ranks) to the mission area, beginning with the advance party on 10 April and the main body on 11 April.

4. In response to my request (S/12620/Add.1), the Government of France has informed me that it will provide the engineering, transport, movement control, headquarters and supply and postal units of the logistic element of the Force. The first French logistic group with 300 personnel and 100 vehicles is scheduled to leave France by sea on 14 April and the remainder of the French logistic group with about 200 personnel and 100 vehicles on 20 April. The Government of Norway has informed me that it will make available the maintenance, air and medical units. Detailed arrangements in this connexion are being worked out.

5. I am continuing consultations concerning additional contingents to UNIFIL, bearing in mind the principle of equitable geographical representation.

Deployment and activities of the Force

6. UNIFIL is currently deployed in an area about three to four kilometers wide south of the Litani River and stretching from the vicinity of the city of Tyre to the Mount Hermon area.

7. The main body of the Norwegian battalion has arrived in the area and was deployed in the eastern sector south of the Litani River which it took over from the Swedish company on 3 April. The deployment of UNIFIL as of 7 April, including base camps and sectors, is as follows from west to east:

(a) French battalion: Base camp at Tyre. It is manning seven checkpoints in the vicinity of Tyre and is patrolling in the area.

(b) Swedish company is deployed in the central/western sector. It has established a base camp at Srifa and is manning four observation posts.

(c) Iranian company is deployed in the central/western sector. The company has established its base camp at Ghanduriyah. It is manning three Observation Posts and is deployed at the Akiya Bridge.

(d) Norwegian battalion is deployed in the eastern sector, with its base camp at Ebel es Saqi. It has established seven posts and, in addition, is manning the Khardala Bridge.

(e) Canadian logistic unit continues to provide communication and movement control facilities for the Force.

(f) UNTSO military observers continue to man the existing five Observation Posts along the Israel-Lebanon border. Selected observers continue to serve in staff positions both at Naqoura forward headquarters and temporary UNIFIL headquarters in Jerusalem. Other observers are providing liaison with the various forces in southern Lebanon.

#### General situation and observance of the cease-fire

8. The Interim Commander of UNIFIL reports that the situation in southern Lebanon has remained generally quiet, with certain local exceptions. In the western sector (French contingent), considerable tension, with occasional exchanges of fire, has continued to prevail, especially around the city of Tyre. In the eastern sector (Norwegian contingent), there have been repeated exchanges of fire, mainly involving Christian de facto armed elements south of the Litani River and PLO armed elements north of the river.

9. An incident not directly involving UNIFIL occurred in the western sector on 5 April, when an IDF vehicle with seven armed IDF soldiers wearing civilian clothes crossed into territory controlled by the PLO, in the vicinity of UNIFIL checkpoint 1-6 (AMR 1726-2928), south-east of Tyre. The vehicle was stopped at a PLO checkpoint, and an exchange of fire ensued. According to the Israeli account, three Israeli soldiers were killed and two were wounded, and the remaining two soldiers returned to Israeli-occupied territory. UNIFIL was in touch with the two sides in an effort to prevent escalation, and UNIFIL troops in the area undertook a search. On 6 April the PLO liaison representative in Beirut informed UNIFIL that the bodies of the five IDF soldiers had been brought to Saida Hospital. UNIFIL is discussing with the PLO arrangements for releasing the bodies to the International Red Cross.

10. On 1 April at 1805 GMT, UNIFIL troops in the Tyre area reported receiving direct rocket-propelled grenade fire (two rounds), which impacted within 20 metres of UNIFIL position CP1 (AMR 1708-2906). French contingent troops returned fire with automatic weapons. The UNIFIL checkpoint is located inside the IDF-controlled area south of the Tyre salient. No injuries were sustained.

11. On 7 April at 0730 GMT, small arms fire was directed at a tower in the French contingent base camp in Tyre, and armed men approached the tower. PLO was warned to keep armed elements away from the UNIFIL battalion headquarters. At 1315 GMT a camouflaged armed man approached the tower with a rocket-propelled grenade weapon. After he had disregarded repeated warnings from the sentry and two warning shots over his head, he was wounded by a third shot.

12. Exchanges of fire between the parties have been reported in the general area during the period under review.

13. In the Norwegian battalion sector on 4 April, an exchange of mortar fire occurred between PLO forces in the vicinity of Yarmaq (AMR 200-310) and Arnaqun (AMR 199-304) and Christian forces in the Marjayoun-El Qlaia area. In addition, movements by the Norwegian battalion in and around Kaoukaba (AMR 2105-3115) drew small arms and automatic fire from positions located to the east (PLO).

14. On 6 April, between 1330 and 1420 GMT, four rounds of mortar fire impacted in the UNIFIL position at Kaoukaba. One Norwegian soldier was slightly wounded.

15. On 7 April, between 0700 and 0900 GMT, the Kaoukaba position received sporadic automatic weapons fire from PLO elements 300 metres to the north, in addition to 22 mortar and 7 artillery rounds. There were no UNIFIL casualties, and protests have been filed with PLO authorities both in Beirut and locally. In a subsequent meeting between the Norwegian company commander in charge of the Kaoukaba area and a representative of PLO, held at 1745 GMT on the same day, it was agreed that the cease-fire would be observed within the Norwegian battalion sector.

16. On 6 April at 1430 GMT, a Swedish UNIFIL convoy en route to Aadeisse (AMR 2015-2955) was stopped by Christian armed elements, which fired over the heads of the convoy, forcing it to return to battalion headquarters.

#### Contacts with the parties

17. The Chief Co-ordinator of United Nations Peace-keeping Missions in the Middle East, Lieutenant-General Ensio Siilasvuo, has continued his contacts with all the parties concerned on the steps to be taken on the speedy implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), especially with regard to the cease-fire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces. The Interim Force Commander, Major-General E. A. Erskine, has been in constant contact with the parties on matters concerning the deployment and functioning of the Force.

18. On 5 April I addressed a message to the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Menahem Begin, in which I stressed my preoccupation over ensuring the

effectiveness of the United Nations operation in southern Lebanon and in forestalling events which could lead to further conflict and bloodshed. I emphasized that resolution 425 (1978) called upon Israel to "withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory", and pointed out that there was now a significant body of United Nations troops in the area. I also expressed my view that as long as there was no significant Israeli withdrawal, UNIFIL would not be able to perform fully its assigned task and that the situation in the area would become increasingly tense. I informed the Prime Minister that I did not consider the withdrawal proposals hitherto submitted adequately met the requirement of resolution 425 (1978) and asked for the Prime Minister's early co-operation.

19. In the evening of 6 April, the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defence Force presented to General Siilasvuo the Israeli plan for the initial withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. Under the plan, the withdrawal would take place in two stages - the first in the Marjayoun/Arqoub area on 11 April. This would include the Khardala Bridge and a number of villages such as Kaoukaba, El-Faradis, El-Habbariya, Ebel El Saki, Kafr Chouba and Shabaa. The withdrawal in this area would exclude the villages of Marjayoun, El-Qlaia, El-Khiam, El-Khirba and Deir Miness. West of Marjayoun, the depth of the withdrawal would be approximately 2 to 3 kilometres, and between Kaoukaba and Shabaa about 7 kilometres. The second stage of withdrawal, which would take place on 14 April, would cover an area from a point on the Litani River 2 kilometres west of Akiya Bridge to a point 1 kilometre west of Deir Miness. The depth of this withdrawal would be approximately 5 to 6 kilometres and the area includes the villages of Taybe, Kantara, Randuria and Ferun, including the main road between Taybe and Randuria.

20. On 7 April, I issued the following statement:

"The Secretary-General is gratified that plans are being made to begin the implementation of the withdrawal provisions of resolution 425. However, he does not think that the plans so far submitted are adequate, since resolution 425 calls for the total withdrawal forthwith of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory."

21. On the same day, I received Prime Minister Begin's reply to my message of 5 April. Mr. Begin reiterated Israel's wish to withdraw its forces from southern Lebanon as speedily as possible and indicated that the implementation of this intention was related to the deployment of the United Nations Force in the area. Mr. Begin expressed Israel's willingness to commence the evacuation of Israeli forces prior to the completion of the deployment of the UNIFIL forces in southern Lebanon and referred to the plan for an initial withdrawal presented to General Siilasvuo by the Chief of Staff of the Israel Defence Force. In this connexion, he recalled that General Siilasvuo and the Chief of Staff had agreed to meet again in a week's time, when the first stage of the withdrawal would be completed, in order to discuss continuation of the process, and he assured me that Israel was maintaining close contact with my representatives in the area as part of the continuing effort to bring about the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

22. I have instructed General Siilasvuo to intensify his contacts with the Israeli Government with a view to the speedy implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) especially in regard to the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. I shall also continue my own efforts with this urgent objective in mind.

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