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INTERIM REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL CONCERNING THE UNITED NATIONS
INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON UNDER SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 444 (1979)

1. In resolution 444 (1979) of 19 January 1979, the Security Council decided to renew the mandate of UNIFIL for five months, until 19 June 1979. It called upon the Secretary-General and UNIFIL to continue to take all effective measures deemed necessary in accordance with UNIFIL's approved guidelines and terms of reference and invited the Government of Lebanon to draw up, in consultation with the Secretary-General, a phased programme of activities to be carried out over the next three months to promote the restoration of its authority in southern Lebanon. In taking this decision, the Council reaffirmed its determination, in the event of continuing obstruction of UNIFIL's mandate, to examine practical ways and means in accordance with relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations to secure the full implementation of resolution 425 (1978) and decided to meet again within three months to assess the situation.
2. Following the adoption of this resolution, the President of the Security Council made a statement on behalf of the members of the Council, requesting the Secretary-General to report to the Council by 19 April 1979 on the implementation of the phased programme of activities.
3. The present report, which is submitted in pursuance of the decisions of the Security Council mentioned above, deals mainly with the elaboration and implementation of the phased programme of activities called for by the Council. The report also gives a brief description of the situation in the UNIFIL area of operation and of recent incidents since they have a bearing on the phased programme of activities.

Phased programme of activities

4. The outline of a phased programme of activities to promote the restoration of the authority of the Lebanese Government as called for in Security Council resolution 444 (1979) was the subject of a preliminary discussion with the Lebanese Permanent Mission to the United Nations and with visiting Lebanese military officers in mid-January. With a view to pursuing these preliminary discussions in more detail with all concerned, I requested Mr. Brian Urquhart, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, to visit the area in mid-February. In the course of this visit, Mr. Urquhart held consultations in Lebanon and Israel and with the Chief Co-ordinator of United Nations Peace-keeping Missions in the Middle East and the Commander of UNIFIL. In Lebanon he had talks with the President, the Prime

Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Defence Minister and the President of the National Assembly. In Israel he met with the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister and senior officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

5. During Mr. Urquhart's visit in Lebanon, the outline of a phased programme was discussed. Discussion was concentrated on the first phase of this programme, which included the following four points:

- (a) The increase by the Lebanese Government of the Lebanese civilian administrative presence in the south, including civil servants, medical personnel, teachers, public works employees, etc. This would involve close co-operation among the Minister of the Interior, the Governor of southern Lebanon, General Erskine and Mr. Saunders, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon. It was also suggested that the Lebanese gendarmerie in southern Lebanon should be reinforced to increase the sense of security.
- (b) The further deployment of Lebanese military personnel in southern Lebanon. It was envisaged that while the present Lebanese liaison teams should remain unchanged, the Lebanese Government would take steps progressively to deploy army units in the north-central sector of the area controlled by UNIFIL with the objective of bringing Lebanese army strength up to one battalion by the middle of April. The modalities of this move would be further discussed in the existing working group composed of representatives of the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL as well as between General Erskine and the Lebanese authorities.
- (c) The United Nations and UNIFIL would intensify their efforts to consolidate the cease-fire and to put an end to harassment of UNIFIL and of the local population by the de facto forces led by Major Haddad.
- (d) In addition, UNIFIL would intensify its efforts to secure further deployment and control of the border area, especially by securing the full implementation of the proposals put forward by UNIFIL in November 1978 (S/13026, para. 22). In this connexion emphasis was placed on the need to undertake the necessary diplomatic contacts to enlist the co-operation of the Government of Israel.

6. Throughout the period under review, intensive and continuing contacts have been maintained with the Lebanese authorities on the basis of the above plan. Contacts with the PLO have also been maintained and during his visit to Beirut the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs had talks with Chairman Arafat relating to the co-operation of the PLO with UNIFIL in carrying out its mandate.

7. Intensive efforts have been made by Mr. Urquhart, General Siilasvuo and General Erskine in contacts with the Israeli authorities to secure the implementation of the UNIFIL proposals of November 1978, particularly the establishment of a security zone around UNIFIL headquarters at Naqoura. Diplomatic approaches have also been undertaken in pursuance of Security Council resolution

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444 (1979) by troop-contributing and other interested Governments in support of the United Nations efforts. So far, however, little progress has been achieved. Major Haddad has also been approached by UNIFIL officials at the operational level on this matter, but his reaction has been consistently negative.

8. In these circumstances, efforts to implement the phased programme have so far centred on the introduction of Lebanese civilian administrative personnel and on the deployment of Lebanese army units in the UNIFIL area of operation. On the former point the Force Commander and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon have held talks with the Minister of the Interior and the Governor of southern Lebanon, to whom special powers and special resources have been given by the Lebanese Government, with a view to expediting the introduction of civilian administrative personnel and the re-establishment of normal economic and social life throughout the area.

9. Reconstruction efforts are under way in the UNIFIL area of operation with the co-operation of UNIFIL and the relevant United Nations agencies. Specific actions already taken by the Lebanese civilian authorities seek to meet urgent requirements such as water and electricity supplies, telephone facilities, repair of school buildings, restoration of health services and repair of roads. Water pumping stations at Ras-el-Ain and Siddiquine have been put back in operation, the station at Et Taibe is being repaired and, following a survey undertaken with UNIFIL assistance, repair work at the Marjayoun pumping station has begun. Telephone facilities have been restored in a number of villages. Repair of school buildings is getting under way, with most schools still functioning in private houses. As to health services, Ministry of Health mobile teams have been active in the area. In addition, the hospital at Tibnin is being reconditioned. Efforts are also being made to bring medical and para-medical staffing of hospitals back to normal. Programmes have been drawn up for the repair of roads, and it is expected that work will start in the very near future.

10. The Lebanese Government has also provided extensive assistance to the population in southern Lebanon. In particular, it has carried out food distribution for some 47,000 families, including more than 10,000 families in the border area, and it has allotted sizable funds for the restoration of housing and schools.

11. The deployment of Lebanese military personnel in southern Lebanon has been the subject of intensive discussions between the Lebanese Government and UNIFIL. The joint working group of UNIFIL and the Lebanese Army, set up in December 1978 (see S/13026, para. 24), has met regularly to examine and plan the proposed deployment. Following these discussions, the Lebanese Government decided, on 13 April, to dispatch a contingent of the Lebanese Army of about 500 all ranks to southern Lebanon. This contingent was to proceed on 17 April from Beirut to southern Lebanon by the coastal road via Kasmiya Bridge. The contingent would be deployed in the UNIFIL area of operation and would be under the operational control of UNIFIL. A reinforced company would be stationed in the north-central sector of the area where UNIFIL is fully deployed, while one platoon would be attached to each of five UNIFIL battalions.

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12. On 14 April, Major Haddad expressed strong opposition to the move of the Lebanese Army contingent to southern Lebanon. He reinforced the de facto forces' positions near the UNIFIL area of deployment and around the UNIFIL headquarters at Naqoura with tanks and heavy mortars and threatened to shoot at UNIFIL and Lebanese Army units if the proposed move should take place. Meanwhile General Siilasvuo contacted the Israeli authorities to inform them of the planned move of the Lebanese Army and to enlist their co-operation and assistance. I addressed a personal message to Prime Minister Begin to this effect. The President of the Security Council and representatives of troop-contributing countries and of other interested Governments also approached the Government of Israel in support of the United Nations efforts. In response to these efforts, the Government of Israel agreed to co-operate with UNIFIL in order to facilitate the planned move.

13. In the afternoon of 17 April the Lebanese Army contingent left Beirut. After an overnight halt in Saida, it reached southern Lebanon early the next morning and was deployed in the UNIFIL area of control as planned.

14. In connexion with the move of the Lebanese Army contingent, the de facto forces launched a series of unprovoked attacks on UNIFIL premises and the UNIFIL headquarters at Naqoura. These incidents are the subject of a special report to the Security Council (S/13254).

Situation in the UNIFIL area of operation

15. UNIFIL has continued its efforts to ensure the peaceful character of its area of deployment and, in particular, to maintain the cease-fire and to prevent infiltration of arms and armed personnel into the area. Where UNIFIL has full control, the situation has remained generally quiet, effective action has been taken to prevent infiltration, and the progressive normalization of life has continued. However, there have been numerous breaches of the cease-fire by the armed elements deployed west and north of the UNIFIL area of operation, by the de facto forces under Major Haddad and, on occasion, by Israeli forces, and tension in the area has significantly increased, particularly during the past month.

16. The number of incidents involving UNIFIL and certain armed elements in the Tyre Pocket and north of the Litani River have increased during the period under review. There were numerous attempts at infiltration of armed personnel into the UNIFIL area of operation and several cases of hijacking of United Nations vehicles and firing at UNIFIL personnel, although the over-all policy of co-operation of the PLO has for the most part kept such tendencies under control. The most serious of these incidents occurred on 3 February. The

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incident originated in a heated discussion which took place when soldiers of a Fijian battalion checkpoint stopped four armed elements. There followed a series of attacks by armed elements on UNIFIL positions in the area of Qana. Two Fijian soldiers were killed and four wounded, and one armed element is believed killed. On that occasion, the four Norwegian members of a medical rescue team also died when their helicopter crashed accidentally after hitting a power line.

17. There has been a marked increase of incidents involving Lebanese de facto forces. These armed groups have not only consistently opposed further deployment of UNIFIL, but have also further restricted the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and have resorted to provocations against UNIFIL patrols, positions and installations, including UNIFIL headquarters at Naqoura.

18. The recent shelling of UNIFIL positions by the de facto forces has been described in my special report of 19 April 1979 (S/13254). Another serious incident took place on 29 March. On the morning of that day, a vehicle transporting three de facto forces leaders was denied passage on the coastal road at a UNIFIL checkpoint near the French logistic component base camp, which is located at the southern end of the UNIFIL headquarters compound at Naqoura. As negotiations with the leaders of the de facto forces were under way, additional men and vehicles appeared on the scene and took up positions on the ridge overlooking the UNIFIL headquarters compound. Without prior warning, they began firing on the UNIFIL headquarters building, on the helipad and on the French logistic component camp with small arms, heavy machine-guns and rocket-propelled grenades. One French soldier who was in the camp was killed and two others wounded.

19. During the period under review, the presence of Israeli military personnel on Lebanese territory controlled by the de facto forces has become increasingly visible as illustrated by a total of 200 recorded border violations up to 8 April. Movements of Israeli jeeps, half-tracks, armed personnel carriers and trucks have frequently been observed in the border area. In addition, Lebanese air space has been violated on several occasions by Israeli military aircraft over and near the UNIFIL area of operation. The presence of Israeli officers has also been observed during incidents involving UNIFIL and the Lebanese de facto forces.

20. There were a number of heavy exchanges of fire across the UNIFIL area of operation between the Lebanese de facto forces and the armed elements north of the Litani River, most of them initiated by the former. Israeli artillery has also been involved in a few of these exchanges. On several occasions, the cease-fire was restored through the good offices of UNIFIL.

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21. It is relevant also to refer to certain recent incidents involving Israeli forces and Palestinian armed elements, which took place outside the UNIFIL area of operation, since they increased tension in the area and had an adverse effect on UNIFIL operations. On 5, 6 and 9 April, there were three bomb explosions in Israel resulting in civilian casualties, for which the PLO claimed responsibility. These were followed on 10 and 11 April by extensive attacks by Israeli forces against targets in the Tyre Pocket and north of the Litani River; on 11 April, armed elements in the Tyre Pocket fired rockets at targets in northern Israel, and the Israel Defense Force responded with artillery and tank fire. These incidents have been brought to the attention of the Security Council and/or the General Assembly by the Permanent Representative of Israel (A/34/175-S/13239 and A/34/184-S/13249), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon (A/34/177-S/13242) and the Permanent Observer of the PLO (S/13241).

OBSERVATIONS

22. The first phase of the programme of activities, which has been worked out by the Lebanese Government in consultation with the Secretary-General and in accordance with Security Council resolution 444 (1979), has been partly implemented. The increase of Lebanese civilian administrative personnel in southern Lebanon, together with the assistance given by the Lebanese Government to the local population, have had clearly beneficial consequences for the region, including some localities controlled by Major Haddad. The recent deployment of a contingent of the Lebanese army in the UNIFIL area of operations has important symbolic as well as practical value.

23. The de facto forces under Major Haddad were adamantly opposed to the deployment of the Lebanese army contingent and sought to thwart it by forceful means. However, after intensive diplomatic efforts, the Government of Israel agreed to co-operate with UNIFIL in facilitating the implementation of this move.

24. Important as they may be, these developments can only be considered as a first step towards the full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Much remains to be done before the tasks entrusted by the Security Council to UNIFIL can be said to have been fully achieved.

25. UNIFIL will now concentrate its efforts on the two points remaining in the first phase of the programme of activities. It will attempt to achieve further deployment and control in its area of operation and, as a matter of urgency, the establishment of a security zone around its headquarters at Naqoura. The vulnerability of this headquarters, which is located in the area controlled by the de facto forces, was made painfully evident during the incident of 29 March and again more recently, when Major Haddad sought to thwart the deployment of the Lebanese army contingent. The establishment of the proposed security zone is indeed essential for the proper functioning of UNIFIL. It is equally essential that the de facto forces refrain from harassing UNIFIL and the civilian population in the UNIFIL area.

26. So far, despite all efforts, the necessary co-operation has not been forthcoming for further deployment of UNIFIL. I view with anxiety the present

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situation, in which UNIFIL is blocked in the full implementation of its mandate and is, by force of circumstances, playing a role substantially different from the role it had been set up to play.

27. The fact remains that the de facto forces continue to perceive their interest to lie in a course of action opposed to co-operation with UNIFIL and to the objectives laid down by the Security Council. In this regard, the position of the Government of Israel will be crucial for efforts to achieve further progress in the coming months.

28. I shall be reporting fully to the Council on all aspects of the operation in two months time when the mandate of UNIFIL will again be under consideration. I feel obliged, however, at this stage to repeat that the present situation concerning the fulfilment of the Security Council mandate cannot continue indefinitely. The tensions which it causes will inevitably have their effect on the functioning of the Force and on the co-operative attitude on many sides which has so far made the existence of UNIFIL possible.

29. In spite of all the difficulties, UNIFIL has performed and is performing an invaluable task in bringing calm to a sorely affected area and in reducing the active threat to international peace and security which the situation in southern Lebanon constitutes. If UNIFIL, for any reason, were to be seriously eroded, those achievements would be nullified and the world would inevitably face once again a highly dangerous and volatile situation in the area. Such a situation would not only be a new disaster for the Government and people of Lebanon, but could also lead to a renewed and serious deterioration of the situation in the Middle East as a whole. I am sure that all Governments, including those most intimately involved, certainly wish to avoid such a development.
