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

(For the period from 13 January to 8 June 1979)

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INTRODUCTION

1. The present report describes developments relating to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the period from 13 January to 8 June 1979. Some of this information was contained in my interim report of 19 April 1979 concerning the implementation of resolution 444 (1979) (S/13258) and in my special reports of 19 April and 9 May (S/13254 and S/13308). The purpose of the present report is to provide a comprehensive account of the activities of UNIFIL since my report of 12 January (S/13026) in pursuance of the mandate entrusted to it by the Council in resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and extended by resolutions 434 (1978) and 444 (1979).

I. COMPOSITION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE FORCE

A. Composition and command

2. The composition of UNIFIL as of 8 June 1979 was as follows:

Infantry battalions

Fiji	656
Ireland	625
Nepal	643
Netherlands	800
Nigeria	776
Norway	653
Senegal	592

Headquarters company

Ireland	129
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Engineer company

France	115
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Logistic units

France	494
Norway	289

TOTAL 5,772

3. In addition to the above personnel, UNIFIL is assisted by 37 military observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine (UNTSO).

4. The Iranian infantry battalion was withdrawn in late January and the French infantry battalion in mid-March. In early March, the new Dutch infantry battalion

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of 800 all ranks arrived, and the Fijian, Nepalese and Nigerian contingents were strengthened by 150, 50, and 180 additional personnel, respectively. Governments have been approached to provide additional troops to bring the Force up to its authorized strength.

Command

5. Command of UNIFIL continues to be exercised by Major-General Emmanuel A. Erskine. Lieutenant-General Ensio Siilasvuo continues as the Chief Co-ordinator of United Nations Peace-keeping Missions in the Middle East.

Rotation of contingents

6. During the present reporting period, French, Irish, Nepalese, Nigerian and Norwegian contingents carried out full rotations. The rotation of the Senegalese contingent is under way.

Casualties

7. During the period covered by this report, four members of UNIFIL were killed and 23 injured as a result of firing incidents. Six soldiers were killed and 15 wounded as a result of accidents.

Discipline

8. The discipline, understanding and bearing of the members of UNIFIL, who have worked in difficult and often dangerous conditions, have been of a high order, reflecting credit on the soldiers and their commanders, as well as on the countries that contribute contingents to the Force.

B. Deployment

9. There has been a significant change in the deployment of the Force since the presentation of my report of 12 January 1979 (S/13026). With the withdrawal of the Iranian and French battalions, UNIFIL had to redeploy with seven instead of eight battalions as before.

10. The present deployment of UNIFIL is as follows (see annexed map):

- a. The Force headquarters is located at Naqoura.
- b. The Senegalese battalion is deployed in the northern part of the western sector with its headquarters at Marakah.
- c. The Fijian battalion is deployed in the southern part of the western sector. Its headquarters is at Qana.

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- d. The Nigerian battalion is deployed in the northern part of the central sector with its headquarters at Tayr Zibna.
- e. The Dutch battalion is deployed in the south-western part of the central sector. Its headquarters is at Haris.
- f. The Irish battalion is deployed in the south-eastern part of the central sector. Its headquarters is at Tibnin.
- g. The Nepalese battalion is deployed in the western part of the eastern sector. Its headquarters is at Blate.
- h. The Norwegian battalion is deployed in the eastern part of the eastern sector. Its headquarters is at Ebel Es-Saqi.
- i. The Irish headquarters company is based in Naqoura.
- j. The French logistic component is located at Naqoura.
- k. The French engineer company is located at Ras al Lawzah.
- l. The Norwegian logistic component is deployed as follows:
 - i. the maintenance company is located in the vicinity of Tibnin;
 - ii. the medical company at Naqoura; and
 - iii. the helicopter wing at Naqoura.
- m. UNTSO military observers continue to man OP Lab. The other four OPs (Hin, Ras, Mar and Khiam) are manned by the Dutch, Irish, Nigerian, and Norwegian battalions.
- n. A composite guard detachment is situated in Tyre Barracks. This 45-man unit from one battalion continues to be drawn on a two-week rotation basis from all battalions in the Force.

II. ACCOMMODATION AND LOGISTICS

A. Accommodation

11. Since the presentation of my report of 12 January (S/13026), the Force has made some progress on the transfer of personnel from tented to prefabricated accommodation both in the field and at headquarters. At Naqoura the prefabricated accommodation programme is virtually completed. In addition to personnel accommodation, a prefabricated hospital complex has been made operational, and communal buildings, cook-houses, dining halls, messes and offices are now

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functioning in their new installations. Work on storage facilities for supplies has also progressed well. In the contingent areas, the programme inaugurated during the second mandate period to provide basic accommodation in camps and OPs continues, with units concerned providing the necessary labour. However, this project has at times been slowed down owing to the prevailing situation in the area of operation.

B. Logistics

12. Logistic support for UNIFIL continues to be provided by the French and Norwegian logistic units. The strength of the logistic components of the Force remains approximately at the same level as recorded in my report of 12 January 1979 (S/13026). However, in view of the nature of its functions, the French engineer company is listed separately in the present report and not as a component of the French logistic unit as before. The functions of UNIFIL logistic units remain as described in my report of 13 September 1978 (S/12845, paras. 22 and 23). Communications continue to be provided by contingents and by Field Service officers.

13. During the period covered by this report, UNIFIL has continued its efforts to increase purchases of supplies from Lebanese sources or through Lebanon. This it has been able to accomplish only on a modest scale in view of continuing difficulties of communication and supply. Arrangements for supplementary provisioning of the Force from the Israeli side have thus been maintained. Included in such provisioning are purchases of frozen meat and dry rations originating in Cyprus and shipped to UNIFIL through the port of Haifa.

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III. FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FORCE

A. Guidelines and terms of reference

14. The guidelines for the operation of UNIFIL are set out in my report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) (S/12611), which was approved by the Security Council in its resolution 426 (1978). As stated in that report, UNIFIL was envisaged as a two-stage operation. In the first stage, the Force was to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory to the international border. Once this was achieved, UNIFIL was to establish and maintain an area of operation. In this connexion, the Force was to supervise the cessation of hostilities, ensure the peaceful character of the area of operation, control movement and take all measures deemed necessary to ensure the effective restoration of Lebanese sovereignty in the area.

B. Co-operation with UNTSO

15. There has been no change in the institutional and operational relationship linking UNIFIL and UNTSO in Lebanon as described in my report of 12 January 1979 (S/13026, para. 14). The only new development to be recorded during the present reporting period concerns the reduction from two to one (OP Lab) in the number of former UNTSO observation posts along the Israel-Lebanon armistice demarcation line manned by UNTSO military observers.

C. Contacts with the parties

16. During the period under review, contacts with the parties concerned have been maintained both at United Nations Headquarters and in the area with a view to further implementing the UNIFIL mandate, particularly as regards the full deployment of the Force, the progressive restoration of the authority and sovereignty of the Lebanese Government in the area and the control of infiltration attempts into the UNIFIL area of operation. As mentioned in my interim report of 19 April 1979, I requested Mr. Brian E. Urquhart, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, to visit the region in mid-February (S/13258, para. 4). In the course of this visit, Mr. Urquhart had discussions with senior officials in Lebanon and Israel, with the Chief Co-ordinator of United Nations Peace-keeping Missions in the Middle East and the Commander of UNIFIL. General Siilasvuo, the Chief Co-ordinator, maintained contact with the parties concerned with a view to securing progress in the further implementation of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 434 (1978) and 444 (1979). Until his departure, in March 1979, Mr. John Saunders, my Special Representative for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon, also assisted UNIFIL by providing a liaison channel with the Lebanese authorities in Beirut whenever required. Pending the arrival of his successor, this function is being carried out by the Acting Head of the United Nations Development Programme office in Lebanon. The services of Mr. Sami Sanbar, Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Beirut, have also been beneficial to the Force.

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17. General Erskine has been in constant contact with the parties on matters concerning the deployment and functioning of the Force. In the area of operation, negotiations and consultations were held by members of UNIFIL with the various armed groups, as required, to ensure the smooth functioning of the Force and to minimize the risks of confrontation and armed clashes. This was generally done by UNIFIL headquarters staff, through United Nations military observer teams and through contacts by the battalion commanders. The battalion commanders investigated local violations of the cease fire and all other situations involving incidents which might have led to hostile activities within the UNIFIL area of operation. UNIFIL also maintained regular contacts with the local civilian authorities and population.

D. Implementation of phased programme of activities

18. The Security Council in resolution 444 (1979) of 19 January 1979 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 the area. This matter has been dealt with in some detail in my interim report of 19 April (S/13258), and I need only recall briefly its main points here. The phased programme was worked out by the Lebanese authorities with the assistance of UNIFIL. It set for its first phase four main objectives: first, an increase by the Lebanese Government of the Lebanese civilian administrative presence in the south; second, the introduction of a battalion of the Lebanese national army into the UNIFIL area of operation; third, the consolidation of a cease-fire in the area and the cessation of harassment of UNIFIL and the local population in its area by the de facto forces; and fourth, further deployment and control of UNIFIL in the border area controlled by the de facto forces on the basis of the proposals put forward by the UNIFIL commander in November 1978 (S/13026, para. 22). The first two objectives were achieved by 18 April when, in the circumstances described in my interim report, a Lebanese battalion of 500 all ranks was introduced and deployed in the UNIFIL area of operation.

19. Since 19 April, persistent efforts have been undertaken, both in the field and at United Nations Headquarters, to bring about the achievement of the remaining objectives. General Siilasvuo and General Erskine contacted the Israeli authorities at various levels. While making clear that the ultimate goal of UNIFIL remains the full control of its area of operation and the restoration of the sovereignty of the Lebanese Government in the south, the two immediate aims for practical reasons are the establishment of an adequate security zone around UNIFIL headquarters at Naqoura and a complete cessation of the harassment of the local population and UNIFIL personnel in the UNIFIL area by the de facto forces. These efforts have been fully and actively supported at United Nations Headquarters by the Secretary-General, the President and the members of the Security Council and by interested Governments. The sense of urgency underlying the situation affecting UNIFIL was reflected in the statements made by the President on behalf of the members of the Security Council on 26 April and 15 May (S/PV.2141 and S/PV.2144). It is also relevant to make a reference in this connexion to the two letters addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon on 7 May and 30 May (S/13301 and S/13361).

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20. Despite all these efforts, little further progress has been achieved so far. At a meeting held on 3 June, the Israeli authorities informed General Siilasvuo and General Erskine that they would agree as a first step to build a by pass road near UNIFIL headquarters, which would reduce confrontation with UNIFIL by the de facto forces stationed in the village of Naqoura. While this proposal constitutes some modest progress, it is not considered adequate by UNIFIL, and negotiations are continuing.

E. Control of infiltration attempts

21. During the period under review, UNIFIL has intensified its action to prevent the entry of armed elements in the area where it exercises full control. To that end it has further refined and diversified the methods described in my report of 13 September 1978 (S/12645, para. 27). There has been an increase in patrolling activity, with greater emphasis on night patrolling. The ongoing deliveries of night observation equipment have greatly improved UNIFIL ability to control its area of operation. This has enabled UNIFIL to stop some 40 major infiltration attempts involving 140 armed elements, who were escorted out of the area of operation. UNIFIL ability to contain and control the small groups of armed elements within the UNIFIL area of operation has also been improved with the use of the new equipment.

22. Efforts undertaken by UNIFIL to keep armed personnel out of its area of operation have also involved the de facto forces and, on occasion, Israeli military personnel. Measures aimed at controlling entry of armed personnel have proved generally effective.

F. Other activities of the Force

23. Consistent with the UNIFIL objective of promoting a progressive return to normal economic and social life in the area, the Force has continued to support the United Nations emergency relief and reconstruction programme for southern Lebanon, which is co-ordinated by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon. In so doing, it has collaborated actively with the Lebanese Government's assistance efforts in the area, which are now under the direct supervision of the Governor of southern Lebanon who has been granted special powers and resources by the central authorities in Beirut. This collaborative effort has contributed significantly to the fulfilment of one of the objectives stipulated in the first phase of the programme of activities. In my interim report of 19 April I provided a summary of these activities (S/13258, paras. 9 and 10). Subsequent to that report, work has continued in all projects referred to therein, although progress is occasionally hampered by shelling and harassment by the de facto forces of Lebanese personnel commissioned to work in the area.

G. Incidents

24. The number of incidents involving Palestinian and Lebanese armed elements and UNIFIL has increased during the period under review. The majority of these incidents involved attempts at infiltration of armed personnel into the UNIFIL area

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of operation which were successfully prevented by UNIFIL. They have also taken the form of hijacking of United Nations vehicles and firing at UNIFIL personnel, although the over-all policy of co-operation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has, for the most part, kept such tendencies in check. The most serious of these incidents occurred on 3 February in the Fijian battalion headquarters area at Qana, which resulted in the death of two Fijian soldiers and the wounding of four others. On that occasion, four Norwegian medical personnel aboard a UNIFIL helicopter that had been dispatched to evacuate one of the wounded Fijian soldiers were also killed as the craft accidentally hit an overhead electric cable and crashed (S/13256, para. 16).

25. Incidents involving the de facto forces and UNIFIL have occurred with greater frequency and intensity than before. This has involved restrictions on freedom of movement of UNIFIL personnel, vehicles and helicopters; firing and other provocations against UNIFIL positions, installations and patrols; and firing into villages and other acts of harassment of the local civilian population within the UNIFIL area of operation. These activities were significantly stepped up at the time of the deployment of the Lebanese army battalion in the UNIFIL area of operation. There were deliberate attacks against UNIFIL headquarters at Naqoura on two occasions. I have referred in my interim report of 19 April to one such incident, on 29 March, which resulted in the death of one soldier and the wounding of two others, all members of the French logistic unit (S/13258, para. 8). The other incident occurred on 18-19 April, in which eight UNIFIL personnel were wounded, six from the Irish headquarters company and two Dutch captains. I brought this serious incident to the attention of the Security Council in a special report of 19 April to the Security Council (S/13254).

26. During the period under review, the de facto forces have shown an increasingly alarming trend towards the use of force not only to frustrate the objective of UNIFIL to gain wider deployment in the area under their control but also to encroach into what appear to be selected points inside the UNIFIL area of operation. Such activity seems to be concentrated on the villages of Tibnin, Shaqra and Brashit in the Irish Battalion area and in some villages located in the southern sector of the Dutch battalion area. On various pretexts, these villages have from time to time come under heavy shelling and serious threats of destruction. These actions have resulted in a number of deaths and injuries to villagers. They have also caused some of the local population to flee from the villages into northern areas of Lebanon. By the beginning of June, approximately 70 per cent of the population have fled from the village of Brashit; approximately 30 per cent from Shaqra; and approximately 10 per cent have fled from Tibnin and most other villages affected.

27. UNIFIL observation posts and positions in the area controlled by the de facto forces have from time to time been subjected to harassment by them. Among the most serious incidents of this nature was the attack on OP Hin on 4 May. In the morning of that day, a group of armed personnel, allegedly from a neighbouring village, forced their way into OP Hin and abducted the three Dutch soldiers of UNIFIL manning the post. On the same day, a civilian Field Service officer on a resupply mission was also abducted by the de facto forces. The three soldiers and the Field Service officer were held in the village of Al Dohayrah until late that evening, when they were released as a result of negotiations between General Erskine, the leader of the

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de facto forces and the Israeli authorities. In another incident, three Irish positions were isolated for three weeks in the latter part of April, when the de facto forces cut all their supply routes.

28. In my interim report of 19 April, I referred to the increasing incidence of Israeli military personnel presence on Lebanese territory controlled by the de facto forces (S/13258, para. 19). UNIFIL has recorded a total of 291 such border violations during the period under review. The most serious border violation occurred on 9 May when a sizable unit of the Israel Defence Force (IDF) entered into the UNIFIL area of operation manned by the Irish battalion in the vicinity of Shaqra. I submitted a special report on this incident to the Security Council on the same day (S/13308).

29. During the period under review, there has been a serious escalation of exchanges of fire across the area where UNIFIL is fully deployed, involving, on one side, Palestinian armed elements and, on the other, either the de facto forces or Israeli forces. Particularly heavy exchanges of artillery and mortar fire took place between 19 and 24 January, between 12 and 17 March, between 22 and 25 April, and during much of the month of May. On most occasions UNIFIL was able to bring about a cease-fire.

30. The most serious recent incident involved heavy exchanges of fire over a period extending from 26 to 30 May between the de facto forces and armed elements. The latter were reported to have initiated most of the firing. On this occasion, the de facto forces not only fired on targets in the Tyre pocket and north of the Litani river, but also into the UNIFIL area of operation. A significant number of rounds impacted inside villages in the UNIFIL area, in some instances close to United Nations positions. At the village of As Siddiqin, four civilians were killed and one wounded. Reasons given by the leader of the de facto forces for shelling targets in the UNIFIL area of operation were that Palestinians had fired at them from inside the UNIFIL area. After exhaustive investigation and checking with approximately 100 UNIFIL posts in the area, the above allegations proved totally unfounded. Fire eventually ceased after persistent efforts by UNIFIL with the parties.

31. Following these exchanges of fire, there were no serious incidents in the area, except one on 6 June when exchanges of fire, reportedly initiated by the de facto forces, took place between the armed elements at the Chateau de Beaufort area and the de facto forces in the vicinity of Marjayoun.

32. Finally, it is relevant to mention certain incidents involving Israeli forces and Palestinian armed elements outside the UNIFIL area of operation, since they have had a bearing on the situation in the area. There were several bomb explosions and other armed activities in Israel for which Palestinian organizations claimed responsibility. A number of extensive attacks by air, sea and by long-range artillery were launched by Israeli forces against targets in the Tyre pocket and north of the Litani river. These incidents inevitably contributed to an increase of tension in the area and had an adverse effect on the functioning of UNIFIL. They have been brought to the attention of the Security Council and/or the General

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Assembly by the Permanent Representative of Israel (S/13028, S/13037, S/13041, S/13053, S/13058, A/34/102-S/13127, A/34/131-S/13192, A/34/151-S/13206, A/34/175-S/13239, A/34/184-S/13249, A/34/203-S/13260, A/34/204-S/13261, A/34/207-S/13264, S/13312/Corr.1, S/13320, A/34/277-S/13346, A/34/298-S/13376), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon (A/34/68-S/13051, A/34/177-S/13242, A/34/278-S/13348, A/34/285-S/13355) and the representatives of the PLO (S/13036, S/13045, S/13052, S/13241, S/13266, S/13269, S/13284, S/13305, S/13351, A/34/300-S/13379).

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IV. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

33. By its resolution 33/14 of 3 November 1978, the General Assembly, among other things, authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for UNIFIL at a rate not to exceed \$11,142,000 per month for the period from 19 January to 31 October 1979 inclusive, should the Security Council decide to continue the Force beyond the period of four months authorized under its resolution 434 (1978) of 18 September 1978. Accordingly, should the Security Council renew the UNIFIL mandate beyond 19 June 1979, the costs to the United Nations for maintaining UNIFIL up to 31 October 1979 would be within the level of the authorization to enter into commitments provided by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/14, assuming continuance of its existing strength and responsibilities. Appropriate financial provision will need to be made by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session in respect of periods after 31 October 1979, if the period of extension determined by the Security Council goes beyond that date.

V. OBSERVATIONS

34. During the period under review, there have been continued efforts at all levels to secure the further implementation of the mandate of UNIFIL as a whole. In my interim report to the Council of 19 April (S/13258), I gave an account of these efforts within the context of the situation in the UNIFIL area of operation. In particular I described the steps which had already been taken in fulfilment of the first phase of the programme of activities drawn up by the Government of Lebanon in consultation with the Secretary-General and in accordance with resolution 444 (1979). Of these the most significant was the deployment of a Lebanese army battalion in the UNIFIL area of operation in mid-April and an increase of Lebanese civilian administrative personnel in southern Lebanon. These certainly represent important steps towards the restoration of the Lebanese Government's authority and sovereignty in southern Lebanon which is one of the most important objectives of the mandate assigned to UNIFIL in Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

35. I regret to say that, in spite of the efforts of succeeding Presidents of the Security Council, the Secretary-General, various Governments in a position to bring their influence to bear, the Chief Co-ordinator of United Nations Peace-keeping Missions and the Force Commander, a stalemate has persisted since mid-April. Continuing difficulties have been encountered in securing the further deployment of UNIFIL into its full area of operation and this situation has been aggravated by the conditions of heightened tension in the area. In my two reports of 19 April (S/13254 and S/13258), I described some of the incidents which had resulted from the forceful opposition of the de facto forces to the deployment of the Lebanese battalion. Since that time, as indicated in my interim report, this unco-operative attitude has persisted and has on all too frequent occasions taken the form of threats and harassing actions both against UNIFIL and against the civilian population in the area of operation. Continued representations to the Israeli authorities have as yet failed to achieve the change of position required for a significant improvement in the deployment of UNIFIL.

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36. The Security Council has voiced its concern over this situation publicly on two occasions since mid-April. I myself am deeply concerned not only at the continued opposition to the full carrying out of the UNIFIL mandate, but also at the forceful manifestations of that opposition and the risks which such manifestations constitute to the lives and security both of the civilian population in the area and of the personnel of UNIFIL.

37. The attitude of some factions of the armed elements has also posed serious problems for the functioning of UNIFIL. There has been some increase in attempts at infiltration of the UNIFIL area of operation, one of which led, on 3 February, to a serious clash with UNIFIL troops. Hijacking of UNIFIL vehicles and firing at UNIFIL positions have also occurred with greater frequency. These developments are disturbing although they have in most instances been brought under control with the co-operation of the representatives of the PLO.

38. I wish to assure the Council that I shall continue my efforts to persuade the parties concerned to afford their co-operation for the full implementation of UNIFIL's mandate. Each of the parties has their own particular preoccupations with the situation in southern Lebanon and it is our task to try to find means by which these preoccupations can be made compatible with the co-operation with UNIFIL which has hitherto been notably lacking in some important respects. In this connexion, there have recently been certain developments which might lead to a relaxation of tension. The PLO leadership have recently reaffirmed their commitment not to initiate any action from inside the UNIFIL area of operation and have stated that they will not shell IDF or de facto forces targets from Lebanese territory unless they are attacked first. It is also relevant to mention a recent joint communiqué issued by the PLO and the allied Lebanese parties within the context of discussions on the situation in southern Lebanon, according to which "all armed forces will be evacuated from villages and towns" and "the PLO will remove all of its offices from the city of Tyre". I shall be following up these and related developments in the hope that it may be possible to bring about conditions in which UNIFIL's mandate can be progressively realized.

39. I wish here to express appreciation to the Government of Lebanon for its co-operation in the efforts of UNIFIL to make progress in extremely difficult conditions. I am very much aware that the situation in southern Lebanon is closely related to the situation in the rest of Lebanon, and that we have an obligation to give a very high priority to assistance to the Lebanese Government in its efforts to restore its authority and sovereignty in the area.

40. I wish also to express appreciation to the successive Presidents of the Security Council for their tireless efforts to bring about positive developments in this situation. Their involvement is a symbol of the responsibility assumed by the United Nations in this extremely sensitive area of the world and of the determination of the Organization to make progress by peaceful means in the interests both of the Government and people of Lebanon and also of international peace and security. I have also greatly appreciated the efforts of a number of Governments in pursuit of resolution 444 (1979), which urged Member States which were in a position to do so to bring their influence to bear in support of UNIFIL's discharge of its mandate.

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41. Although the present report shows clearly the obstacles which have so far prevented UNIFIL from fulfilling all of its tasks, I wish to emphasize once again the indispensable function which UNIFIL is actually performing 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 would otherwise constitute. For this reason and taking into account all aspects of the problem, I feel obliged to recommend for the Council's consideration the extension of the mandate of UNIFIL for a further period of six months. The Lebanese Government has informed me of its full agreement with this recommendation. Although I am aware that there may be reservations about the period suggested, I believe that taking into account both the political and practical factors concerned, such a recommendation is realistic.

42. Although, as I have explained, I have no alternative but to make this recommendation, I must also express my view that UNIFIL cannot continue to function without certain essential conditions being fulfilled. An adequate security zone around the UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura is perhaps the most immediate of these. A cessation of the harassment of the civilian population and of UNIFIL by the de facto forces is another prerequisite. It goes without saying that a change in the position of the Israeli authorities is yet another prerequisite for significant progress. The continuation of the over-all co-operation of the PLO is also an essential condition of the effective discharge by UNIFIL of its duties. The fulfilment of these conditions will enable UNIFIL to achieve a significant and steady rate of progress in fulfilling all of the tasks assigned to it by the Security Council. This alone can in the end justify the continuation of this very important peace-keeping operation.

43. In concluding this report, I wish to pay tribute to the Chief Co-ordinator of United Nations Peace-keeping Missions in the Middle East, Lieutenant-General Ensio Siilasvuo, to the Commander of UNIFIL, Major-General Erskine, and his staff, both civilian and military, the officers and men of the contingents of UNIFIL as well as the UNTSO military observers assigned to the area, for their courage, dedication and steady discipline in the face of a very difficult and sometimes dangerous situation. I wish also to express my appreciation to the Governments which are providing contingents and other forms of support to UNIFIL.

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