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### **Palestinian Attack on Northern Israeli Kibbutz, April 1980 - Subsequent Israeli Incursion into Southern Lebanon - Israeli Raids on Palestinian Positions, April-June 1980**

During the night of April 6–7, 1980, five Palestinian guerrillas forced their way into the Misgav Am kibbutz in northern Israel close to the Lebanese border, where they took over a dormitory and held one adult and six children hostage for nine hours before being killed in an assault by Israeli troops. Three Israelis—a soldier, a child and the kibbutz secretary—also lost their lives during the siege. The guerrillas were understood to belong to the pro-Iraqi Arab Liberation Front (ALF), which said that the raid had been timed to coincide with the 33rd anniversary of the founding of the *Baath* Arab Socialist Party.

The guerrillas had killed the kibbutz secretary as they forced their way into the compound and then seized a children's dormitory; there they held the six children and one adult hostage and reportedly shouted conditions for their release, which included the freeing of some 50 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli gaols. An initial attempt by Israeli troops to storm the building failed and resulted in the death of one soldier, but several hours later a second assault proved successful and all five guerrillas were shot dead. One small child was found to be dead after the siege had ended but it was not clear whether he had been killed by the Palestinians or by accident during the Israeli rescue operation.

Israeli military authorities expressed serious concern at the guerrillas' ability to pass undetected through the border area and, in a letter to the UN security Council on April 7, Mr Yehuda Blum, Israel's permanent representative at the UN, protested that their passage had been through positions manned by UNIFIL troops and that this was "not the first time" that the PLO had "set about its criminal acts through UNIFIL's lines".

While the UN Secretary-General, Dr Kurt Waldheim, in a statement issued on April 7 said that he "deeply deplored the violent incident at Misgav Am", other UN officials maintained that there was no evidence that the attackers had come through UNIFIL's area of operations; that the Israelis themselves were making the UN's task in southern Lebanon virtually impossible; that shortly before the Palestinian raid Christian militias in the south, backed by Israelis, had been attacking Irish UN positions with machine-gun, mortar and tank fire [see below]; and, moreover, that the

guerrillas who attacked Misgav Am had ultimately passed through the buffer zone provided by the Christian enclave.

Just before entering Israel the guerrillas had passed through a minefield in the enclave and had then cut their way through barbed wire and an electronic fence on the border. It was subsequently revealed that the minefield had been rendered inactive by a fire several months earlier but had not been replaced and that there had also been a fault in the alarm system of the electronic fence which had similarly not been repaired. Five Israeli officers belonging to an administrative group responsible for maintaining the border security system were subsequently court-martialled for negligence.

In connexion with other allegations made by Israel both before and immediately after the incident at Misgav Am that there were "hundreds" of Palestinian guerrillas in the UN zone, UN officials stated that there were only some 220 guerrillas there and that these were "here when we arrived" and were "completely neutralized"; furthermore (according to a report in *The Guardian* of April 10) they considered it "hypocritical" of the Israelis to "denounce a supposed guerrilla presence in the UNIFIL zone when [they] so flaunt their own presence there".

(Earlier, on March 10, Maj.-Gen. Emmanuel E. Erskine, then the UNIFIL commander, had said that the situation in southern Lebanon would remain at an "impasse" until Israel changed its attitude towards the UN mandate, and pointed out that the problems facing UNIFIL could have been eliminated if its original deployment in 1978 had been preceded by an "international agreement" signed by Israel, Lebanon and the United Nations.)

Against a background of calls by right-wing Israeli politicians for firmer action to be taken against guerrillas following the Misgav Am attack, over 250 Israeli soldiers, supported by an estimated 30 tanks, armoured personnel carriers and half-tracks, entered the southern Lebanese border area on April 9, taking up positions opposite the Irish UN contingent (stationed just north of the Christian-held enclave in an area running roughly from Bennt Jbeil to Addaysse--see map on page 30093). They were reinforced the following day by about 100 more soldiers, while Israeli planes flew over the south of the country drawing fire from Palestinian-leftist forces.

Although the Israeli authorities revealed little about this latest operation, senior UN officials said that the Israelis were using heavy earth-moving equipment to establish positions-two inside the Christian enclave and one, near Kunin, in the UN sector manned by the Irish battalion-and expected them to remain there for some time.

As many as 11 Israeli tanks were said to have been withdrawn shortly after their arrival in southern Lebanon but these were rapidly replaced by an increased number of

armoured personnel carriers and bulldozers. The Israelis were also understood to have enabled two tanks belonging to Maj. Haddad's forces to move up to within 500 yards of Irish UN positions at At-Tiri on April 10 [see also below].

The Israeli Government described its operation in southern Lebanon as temporary and purely defensive, aimed at preventing the possible recurrence of guerrilla attacks such as that at Misgav Am.

The UN, which had put its force on the alert in the area but which did not attempt to stop the Israeli penetration, protested to the Israeli Government about the incursion, while Lebanon's permanent representative at the United Nations, Mr Ghassan Tueni, on April 10 called for a meeting of the security Council to "put an end to Israeli aggression and enable UNIFIL to acquire full control of the totality of its area of operations".

(On April 24 the security Council, which had for over 10 days been meeting to discuss Christian harassment of UN soldiers--see below--approved a resolution which strongly deplored Israel's "military intervention" and condemned interference with the peace-keeping force--see page 30874. The United States, the Soviet Union and East Germany had abstained from voting on the resolution, the United States objecting to the word "deplores" in connexion with Israel's activities, the latter two objecting on the grounds that the resolution did not attack Israel's "aggression" and "expansionist aims" sufficiently strongly.)

On April 11, 1980, Israel said that it had begun withdrawing those of its forces in southern Lebanon who had "completed their mission there", and on April 14, in the face of mounting international pressure, said that all its troops had been withdrawn after accomplishing "certain engineering tasks". The complete evacuation of Israeli soldiers and armour could not, however, be confirmed by UNIFIL [see below] and there was considerable speculation that residual units had remained to man the three advance positions set up.

Moreover, on June 27, 1980, Lebanese Foreign Ministry officials said that the Government had complained to the security Council that Israel had seized Lebanese territory and had established military outposts in the southern border area with a view to establishing "permanent and strategic control" of the border region. On the same day Mr Tueni was understood to have submitted to Dr Waldheim a document giving details of the Lebanese complaint and the territory alleged to have been taken by Israel.

According to a report in *The Times* of June 27 the 12-page report, which had been drawn up by the Lebanese Army command, stated that "about 45,000 square

kilometres of Lebanese land had been brought under Israeli control at various points in the border strip controlled by Israeli-backed rightist militias" and that "in the last two weeks Israeli forces have set up gun emplacements, military training centres and fortified positions at Aita el-Chaab, Alma el-Chaab, Al Khyarm and Marjayoun".

United Nations sources in Beirut at this time were said to have confirmed that the Israelis had deployed units of 30 men in two positions in the south where heavy guns and armoured vehicles were brought in through the border, although they admitted that neither UNIFIL nor UN truce observers were permitted to enter the areas concerned. A report in *Le Monde* of June 28, however, stated that UN soldiers stationed in the occupied Golan Heights had verified that Israel had installed positions in southern Lebanon.

During the period from April to June Israel made a number of raids on Palestinian positions in southern Lebanon which were said to be part of Israel's continuing policy of striking guerrillas "at any time and in any place". Such attacks, which often involved the landing of Israeli commandos well inside Lebanese territory, included the following:

*April 18.* A seaborne force backed by helicopter gunships raided a Palestinian base near Sarafand (between Tyre and Sidon on the coast) which Israel claimed had been used as a training camp for guerrillas and as a starting point for incursions into Israel. The Israelis said that they had killed six guerrillas while two of their own men had been wounded.

*May 8.* A commando force of some 150 men landed at two points on the Lebanese coast and launched simultaneous attacks, one against a jeep carrying three guerrillas near Damour (some 12 miles south of Beirut), the other at Saksakieh (about 30 miles south of the capital), where a vehicle carrying a Palestinian patrol was ambushed. In all at least five guerrillas were killed. (Several days before these raids there had been an attack in the Israeli town of Hebron on May 2 in which six Israelis had been killed and 16 wounded.)

*May 15.* Israelis and Christian militiamen from the southern border area bombarded three Palestinian camps near Tyre while at the same time Israeli troops were dropped by helicopter at two villages near Nabatiyah where they blew up houses and left behind several booby-trapped devices, one of which reportedly killed seven Palestinians belonging to the pro-Syrian *al-Saiqa* guerrilla group. (The previous day Israelis had intercepted and killed three armed Palestinians as the latter attempted to enter Israel near a kibbutz in the western border area.)

*May 23.* Israelis or their Christian allies fired two shells into the centre of Sidon killing four and wounding 12. (Sidon had earlier, on March 17–21, come under long-range artillery fire following which Palestinians had retaliated with rocket fire on northern Israel on March 21.)

*June 5.* Sidon was again attacked with the result that during a visit to the city later in June Mr Arafat announced that he had ordered the closure of all guerrilla offices there which were to be withdrawn to refugee camps (the PLO having the previous year announced its intention to withdraw from Tyre and Nabatiyah--see page 30096).

*June 30.* Israeli troops destroyed buildings at a Palestinian base near Qasmiyah bridge north of the Litani river which were said to have been used by the ALF for training and arms storage purposes. Maj.-Gen. Rafael Eitan, the Israeli Army Chief of Staff, described this raid as the "biggest strike against Palestinian targets in 18 months" and said that between 10 and 20 guerrillas had been killed while denying reports that there had been Israeli and civilian casualties as well.

Following the breakdown of the ceasefire in southern Lebanon and the resumption of hostilities in late 1979 and the first part of 1980, attacks by rightist Christian militiamen on the UN forces mounted; a *Times* report of March 5, quoting a UN spokesman, said in this context that UN soldiers were being "singled out" for acts of retaliation by Christians "after every incident of violence or infiltration by Palestinians".

The animosity of Maj. Haddad's forces was directed in particular against the 700-strong Irish contingent who were accused of favouring the PLO and of allowing guerrillas to infiltrate UN-held territory for raids against Israel and the Christian enclave, such allegations being more frequent in the wake of the Palestinian attack on the Misgav Am kibbutz [see above]. In this connexion Maj. Haddad drew attention to a statement made in Bahrain on Feb. 10 by the Irish Foreign Minister, Mr Brian Lenihan, who expressed his support for an independent state for the Palestinians and recognition that the PLO should be involved in any settlement made in the Middle East conflict. Maj. Haddad repeatedly demanded the withdrawal of the Irish and their replacement by a "more reliable" force, threatening to take action against them if they remained in southern Lebanon; however, the Irish, who categorically rejected all allegations of favouritism or negligence, refused to leave.

This situation gave rise to almost two weeks of frequently fierce clashes in and around the UN zone in April 1980, resulting in the deaths of one Fijian and one Irish soldier.

The fighting had started on April 7 when Christian militiamen, who had over the past few weeks already established a presence in several villages under Irish control

(having in late 1979 threatened to use force against villages which did not join the enclave when asked to), attempted to take up positions in At-Tiri, a Shia Moslem village just north of Bennt Jbeil on the edge of the enclave under the control of Irish UN soldiers. Both sides exchanged heavy artillery fire for two days during which time one Irish soldier was seriously wounded and died in an Israeli hospital on April 16, while another Irish soldier was wounded on April 8. Other UN soldiers reinforced the Irish at At-Tiri but the Christians nevertheless succeeded in establishing a position near to that of the UN force.

Although the fighting had died down by April 9 tension persisted, being heightened by reports of an Israeli incursion into southern Lebanon in the wake of the guerrilla raid on the Misgav Am kibbutz [see above]. On April 11, moreover, rightist militia fired on a convoy carrying Brig.-Gen. Ole Nilsen, UNIFIL's Norwegian deputy commander, and other UN officers and soldiers, but no casualties were reported, while about 120 other UNIFIL men stationed in the area had their supply routes blocked by Christians and faced shortages of food and water for several days which led the UN to put pressure on Israel to persuade its allies to open up the supply route; some UN soldiers were briefly held hostage.

On April 12 fierce fighting broke out again at At-Tiri resulting in the death of a Fijian soldier, one Christian militiaman and at least two young Lebanese civilians. After this latest round of fighting rightist artillery bombarded UNIFIL's headquarters at Naqoura on the coast, causing considerable damage, in particular to the Italian-run helicopter fleet. The following day Dr Waldheim called an urgent meeting of the security Council which was told that UNIFIL was enduring "intolerable" harassment by Maj. Haddad's militia.

On April 17 militiamen forced four unarmed UN observers, who had latterly been frequent targets of Christian attacks, out of their outpost near the Israeli border and seized electronic monitoring equipment. A UN spokesman later complained that this action, coupled with the Lebanese Christians' control of the border strip, made it impossible to verify Israel's statement that it had withdrawn its troops sent into Lebanon the previous week [see above].

The tension between the Christian militia and the Irish contingent culminated in the murder of two Irish soldiers and the wounding of a third on April 18.

The three Irishmen had been part of a convoy ambushed by Christian militiamen near Bennt Jbeil the same day and had been singled out, disarmed and then apparently handed over to a Shia Moslem family (belonging to the Barzi clan) for ritual killing in revenge for the death of a young relative in earlier clashes. The first soldier to be shot was only wounded and was later released together with the other non-Irish members of

the convoy (two UN observers and two American Associated Press journalists), but the other two Irishmen, Pte. Thomas Barrett (29) and Pte. Derek Smallhorne (31), who had escaped during the first shooting but were swiftly recaptured, were shot at close range.

Both the Christians and the Israelis held the Shia Moslem family entirely responsible for the killings (the Barzi family moreover admitting that they had killed the soldiers and threatening to do the same again if the situation arose). In contrast, the Irish Government and the other countries contributing to UNIFIL blamed Maj. Haddad's militia (and indirectly also Israel in view of that country's support for the militia), drawing attention to a UN intelligence report of April 17 which stated that Maj. Haddad had issued a threat to the villagers of At-Tiri either to produce the bodies of two dead Irish soldiers or to pay a forfeit of the equivalent of some £5,000.

In a statement made on April 18, 1980, the UN security Council (which had been meeting since April 13 to discuss the deteriorating situation in the south) said that it was "shocked and outraged at the report... on the attacks on the force and the cold-blooded murder of peace-keeping soldiers by the de facto forces"; strongly condemned "those who share in the responsibility for this outrageous act"; and reaffirmed its "intention to take such determined action as the situation calls for to enable UNIFIL to take immediate and total control of its entire area of operations up to the internationally recognized boundaries".

On April 20, 1980, the Irish Government issued a statement at a special meeting which expressed grief and concern at the recent events but which emphasized that Irish troops would not be withdrawn from Lebanon and stressed the importance of the continued presence of the entire UN force in the southern border area. (Some Irish troops were however replaced on April 22 by Norwegian soldiers but remained in the upper UN zone, while about half of the Irish contingent was at this time also being replaced by other Irish soldiers under normal rotation procedures.) The Irish Government called on the UN security Council to implement its decision made in its April 18 statement (i.e. that it would act to take control of its entire area of operations up to internationally recognized borders) and to ensure that the Christian militia ceased their constant harassment and were "deprived of all outside support". Regarding Israeli allegations about the Palestinian attack on Misgav Am, the Irish Government statement said there was "no evidence that the infiltrators who carried out this attack came through the area where UNIFIL has been allowed to exercise effective control".

On April 22, 1980, the Foreign Ministers of the European Community countries meeting in Luxembourg issued a statement in which they "expressed their profound revulsion at the recent killing of UNIFIL soldiers and especially at the brutal and cold-

blooded murder on April 18 by the irregular forces of Maj. Haddad of two unarmed soldiers of the Irish contingent" and "called strongly on all concerned to give their fullest support to the measures decided on by the security Council" to enable UNIFIL to fulfil its peace-keeping mission. On April 28 the heads of government of the Community countries issued a statement denouncing "the acts of violence committed in southern Lebanon against members of UNIFIL" and demanding that these "should cease immediately" and that "the force be permitted to carry out in full its mandate from the security Council" [see page 30635].

On April 24 the security Council adopted a resolution (on which the Soviet Union, East Germany and the United States abstained--see above) in which it inter alia reaffirmed its determination to "implement its previous resolutions in the totality of the area of operations assigned to UNIFIL up to the internationally recognized boundaries". At the same time, and with a view to "assisting the UN in promoting this objective", Mr Lenihan invited Dr Waldheim and representatives of all 11 countries contributing to UNIFIL to meet in Dublin on May 2 to discuss the difficulties facing the force. In a communiqué issued at the end of the Dublin meeting UNIFIL called on Israel to cease its military assistance to Maj. Haddad as "Israel's support of the de facto forces had been the key factor in enabling those forces to act as they had", and reiterated its appeals to all parties to co-operate fully with the UN in southern Lebanon.

The security Council on June 17, 1980, voted by 12 votes to none with two abstentions (Soviet Union and East Germany) in favour of extending the UNIFIL mandate by six months until Dec. 19-Resolution 474 (1980). Both countries who abstained had requested the security Council to condemn Israeli actions in southern Lebanon. China did not participate in the voting. [For further six-month renewal of mandate in December 1980, see below.]

In renewing the UNIFIL mandate the Council reiterated its full commitment to the role assigned to the force and condemned "all actions contrary to the provisions of the mandate" and "in particular continued acts of violence" which prevented its fulfilment.

On June 17 Israeli defence sources reported that a Senegalese UN officer who had the previous year been sentenced in Tel Aviv for smuggling arms for the PLO [see page 30095] had been expelled from Israel.

Following a relative lull in cross-border activity over the previous six weeks, Israel in mid-August 1980 stepped up its attacks on Palestinian positions in southern Lebanon, this renewed activity resulting in an aerial battle between Syrian and Israeli aircraft



over the border area on Aug. 24. [For previous such clashes between Israeli and Syrian planes, see pages 30096, 30098.]

This latest Israeli offensive began on Aug. 14 with a land, sea and air attack on Palestinian targets located near Tyre and Sidon, followed by a considerably larger operation during the night of Aug. 19–20 when a ground force, backed by artillery fire and aerial attacks, raided several positions in the Arnoun plateau north of the Litani river. The Israelis claimed that they had killed at least 40 guerrillas for the loss of three of their own men and emphasized that they had taken care to avoid civilian casualties. The Palestinians on the other hand maintained that they had killed or wounded 30 Israeli soldiers and had lost 12 dead with 14 wounded among their own ranks. Israel described this as the largest operation of its kind since its incursion into southern Lebanon in 1978 [see page 29648-52], the head of military intelligence, Maj.-Gen. Yehoshua Seguy, adding that it was a pre-emptive attack to keep the PLO "busy with their defence instead of planning an attack against us".

After an artillery bombardment from inside Israeli territory, the Israeli land force, estimated by Lebanese authorities to number 500 men, crossed into southern Lebanon and after a five-hour march which took them over the Litani river attacked Palestinian command posts, logistics and operation bases and ammunition supplies in Arnoun, Hama Arnoun, Tibnit, Mazraat Tahar and Jbeil Tahara. The Israelis, who were engaged in fighting with guerrilla forces for about two hours, claimed to have destroyed a large amount of military hardware, including anti-aircraft guns and six 120 mm mortars as well as more than 20 houses and buildings used by Palestinian guerrillas. The Israeli land force was eventually lifted out of the area by helicopter while planes bombarded the Palestinian stronghold at Beaufort Castle, making a direct hit on an artillery ammunition store which was understood to have caused many casualties; a nearby (unoccupied) UN observation post was also completely destroyed. Christian militia were believed to have backed up the Israelis throughout the operation.

Immediately after the Israeli raid Palestinians on Aug. 20 launched rocket attacks on northern Israel, shortly after which Israeli planes went into action again over southern Lebanon, this time striking at positions in the Nabatiyah plateau. After the Israeli aircraft had left the area artillery fire from the Christian enclave was directed at Nabatiyah.

Following further Israeli action a number of Syrian MiG-21s on Aug. 24 challenged Israeli planes over southern Lebanon which, according to Israeli military sources, had been on a routine reconnaissance patrol. A dogfight ensued with the result that one Syrian MiG was shot down, while Syria also claimed to have shot down an Israeli aircraft.

Israel did not reveal which of its aircraft were involved in the aerial battle but according to a report in the *International Herald Tribune* published shortly after a subsequent dogfight in December [see below] Israel's raids in Lebanon were usually carried out by Israeli-made Kfir delta-wing fighter bombers and by US-made F-4 Phantoms; occasionally F-15 fighter bombers gave high cover support, although the United States objected to the use of the latter for non-defensive purposes [see page 30096].

Israeli action in southern Lebanon, which was frequently backed up by the rightist militia groups in the Christian enclave, continued in September and October 1980, giving rise to repeated international criticism. Among the countries to criticize Israel publicly was the United States, the then State Department spokesman, Mr John Trattner, warning on Oct. 23 that the United States would have to take action against Israel if that country was found to be using US-made weapons for offensive purposes. [See page 30097 for earlier such warning by the United States to Israel.]

On a number of occasions in mid-1980 the PLO leader, Mr Arafat, had said that he expected the United States to refrain from criticizing or pressurizing Israel during the US presidential election campaign as no candidate would want to risk jeopardizing the American Jewish vote; he also expected Israel to take advantage of this situation and to launch a massive offensive against all Palestinian positions in southern Lebanon before the presidential election on Nov. 4.

At the end of October 1980 it was reported that Israel had seized land and water resources in the Christian-held enclave near the village of Addaysse about a mile inside the border and that the Lebanese Government had complained to the UN security Council.

*The Financial Times* of Oct. 29, quoting the Lebanese daily *An Nahar*, reported that Mr Halim Fayyad, the Governor of southern Lebanon, had received information revealing that Israel had established control over the head waters of the al-Wazzani river (a tributary of the Jordan), the source of which was about six miles south of Marjayoun. Israeli troops were said to have begun building a road linking the area to Israel and also to have mined it, fenced it off and built military outposts there.