

Jun 1979 - Israeli Invasion of Southern Lebanon, March 1978 -Deployment of UN Peace-keeping Force -Israeli Withdrawal

Israel on the night of March 14–15, 1978, launched a major invasion of southern Lebanon with 20,000-25,000 ground troops backed by tanks, artillery, fighter planes and gunboats. The operation was mounted notwithstanding a number of diplomatic moves to forestall an anticipated reprisal attack in reply to the March 11 guerrilla raid on Israel and despite assurances by the Lebanese Government that it was in no way responsible for the Palestinian action[see above].

Although the Israeli incursion was widely regarded as retaliation for the *Fatah* raid, Israeli spokesmen on March 15 asserted that the operation was essentially a preventive action to eradicate Palestinian guerrilla bases in the south of Lebanon and to establish a security zone some six miles deep, thereby preventing further attacks on Israeli soil.

At a press conference later that day Mr Ezer Weizman (the Israeli Defence Minister) stressed that the operation had been launched "to clear this infested area once and for all" and warned that Israel would keep control of the area until it had received assurances that the PLO could no longer strike at Israel. Mr Weizman's comments were endorsed by Mr Begin, who described his country's incursion as "an act of legitimate self-defence.

The Israeli Government also stressed that its intention was neither to engage the predominantly Syrian Arab "deterrent" force stationed in Lebanon since late 1976[see pages 28123-24] north of the Litani river (presumed to mark the so-called "red line", to the south of which Israel had warned that it would not tolerate any Syrian presence) nor to harm the civilian population[For Israeli involvement in fighting in Southern Lebanon up to early March 1978, see [2903 A.](#)]

The Israeli ground attack on March 14–15 was launched across the entire length of the 60-mile border but was concentrated at three main points-in the east near the Arqoub or "Fatahland", in the central border region and on the coast. By the end of the first day's action Israeli troops had advanced some six miles inside Lebanese territory and had overrun at least five Palestinian positions, namely Naqoura on the coast, Bennt Jbail and Maroun el Ras in the central sector and the strongholds of Khiam and Ibl el Saki at the approaches to the Arqoub. Fierce fighting was also reported in other areas near the Arqoub, notably around Rashaya al Foukhar near the slopes of Mount Hermon The PLO admitted the loss of some positions but affirmed that its forces were resisting the Israeli attack.

While the ground troops advanced from the border, the Israeli Air Force struck at the port of Tyre, where the Palestinians were said to have received recent large deliveries of arms [see page [29032](#)] and its surrounding refugee camps, notably Rashadiyah, where according to the Israelis the Palestinians had established a military base.

In anticipation of a retaliatory Israeli attack on the south of Lebanon, Palestinian guerrilla forces had by March 12 begun to evacuate camps in the border region, some taking up positions to resist the expected assault and others withdrawing to areas north of the Litani river. It was estimated that only about one-fifth of some 5,000 guerrillas present in southern Lebanon at the time of the March 11 raid on Israel remained by the time the Israelis attacked. The civilian population also took shelter, and as many as 200,000 people, the majority of these Moslems, were reported to have fled to areas further north.

Israeli warplanes and gunboats also attacked areas north of the Litani river, where the town of Damour and the Palestinian camps of Chatila, Sabra and Bourj al Barajni on the outskirts of Beirut were hit from the air in the afternoon of March 15; the Palestinian camp at Ouzai, just south of the capital, was also attacked by the Israelis, who claimed that it "served and continued to serve as a training and maintenance base for terrorist naval units", although there were subsequent reports that heavy civilian casualties had been inflicted during the raid. Despite the Israeli bombardments of areas north of the Litani river, Syrian troops did not intervene and there was no confirmation of reports that they had used anti-aircraft missiles against Israeli planes, even though Syria declared on March 15 that its aircraft would be available "to protect the Arab deterrent force from Israeli artillery".

Palestinian sources alleged that Christian militia had joined forces with the Israeli ground troops to track down Palestinian guerrillas and also asserted that Christians had looted a number of villages overrun by the Israelis and had in one incident killed about 70 Moslems sheltering in a mosque in Khiam. However, these allegations were not substantiated by independent observers.

In the evening of March 15 Mr Begin declared that Israel had achieved its objectives but stressed that before agreeing to withdraw his Government would require guarantees that the south of Lebanon would no longer be used as a base for guerrilla activities. Moreover, notwithstanding Israeli claims that a "clear corridor" had been established along the entire length of the border, sporadic Palestinian resistance continued with the result that a "mopping-up" operation in areas south of the Litani river was commenced on March 16.

This operation involved in particular an Israeli advance to villages near Hassbaya in the Arqoub, although the progress of the Israeli troops was hampered by the difficult terrain and a large number of minefields laid by retreating guerrillas; in many of the villages which they overran the Israelis found extensive arms caches. The ground forces were again supported by aircraft and gunboats; Tyre was bombarded for the second day running while Israeli planes also bombed the main supply routes between the north and south of the country and mounted further attacks on Damour and on Nabatiyah.

On March 17 Israeli ground troops pushed forward to areas beyond the six-mile security belt, overrunning Tibnin, where they reportedly met with fierce resistance, and seven nearby villages under Palestinian control, where the inhabitants were said to have welcomed the Israelis. Further air and naval attacks on March 17 north of the Litani river included a commando raid near Adloun (north of Tyre) in which at least 14 people were killed when two cars were hit by Israeli fire. While most of the dead were reported to be fleeing civilians (including women and children), the PFLP in Beirut said that one of its senior officers, code-named Jihad Carlos, had

been killed in the attack and Israeli spokesmen confirmed that the PFLP officer had been the target of the ambush.

At the end of March 17 Israeli military spokesmen claimed that the entire length of the six-mile security belt was virtually clear of guerrillas. However, spokesmen for the Palestinian forces, which were reportedly establishing a new defence line between Nabatiyah and Sarafand on the coast, declared that there would be no ceasefire and a number of Palestinian counter-attacks were launched. Palestinian guerrillas also stepped up their shelling of Christian and Israeli-held villages in southern Lebanon and areas in northern Israel, where two Israelis were killed by rockets on March 17.

It had moreover been announced on March 16 that Syria would allow Iraqi volunteers free passage through Syria to reinforce Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon and to supply them with arms and ammunition, the first deliveries of which were reported to have arrived in Lebanon on March 20. The PLO was also understood to have received other reinforcements and arms including military aid from Syria, while the "resistance front" states (i.e. Syria, South Yemen, Algeria and Libya together with the PLO—see pages 29163-64, 29169), meeting in Damascus on March 19–20, expressed their intention to continue to supply the PLO with weapons.

On March 18 the then Israeli Chief of Staff, Lt.-Gen. Mordechai Gur, confirmed that Israel had abandoned its original intention of establishing a six-mile security zone and had pushed further north; he added that Israel was now "talking not so much about a security belt" as a political agreement which would eradicate the Palestinian guerrilla presence from Lebanon entirely, but he stressed once again that Israel did not intend to establish a military administration or permanent presence in southern Lebanon.

By the end of the following day (when the UN security Council adopted a resolution calling for Israel's withdrawal and providing for the stationing of UN forces in the south of Lebanon—see below), Israel controlled the whole of the region south of the Litani river except for a small salient around Tyre and its surrounding refugee camps, on which Israeli artillery continued to fire.

Although the Israelis had by March 19 virtually surrounded Tyre and its neighbouring Palestinian camps, "out of consideration for the civilian population" they did not cut off the area entirely, which enabled Palestinian forces to keep Tyre supplied via the coastal route; moreover, in the course of the following days a number of guerrillas were reported to have returned to the area, and exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and guerrillas continued in this and other areas.

The Israeli Government declared a ceasefire in southern Lebanon on the afternoon of March 21, 1978—the announcement coinciding with the opening of talks between Mr Begin and President Carter in Washington[see below]w. The majority of PLO factions, however, continued to call for a complete and unconditional Israeli withdrawal before they would agree to stop fighting, and sporadic clashes continued to occur in the following weeks.

Official Israeli figures given on March 21 put the number of Israeli soldiers killed in the operation to date at 20 and estimated the number of Palestinian guerrillas killed at between 250

and 400. On the other hand, Palestinian spokesmen claimed that 450 Israeli soldiers had been killed against the loss of 144 guerrillas killed, while Lebanese sources estimated that Palestinian and civilian Lebanese dead totalled 1,168. Western diplomatic sources in early April estimated the civilian death toll at about 1,000. (A further seven Israeli soldiers were killed in guerrilla ambushes on April 5 and 12.)

The Lebanese Government on March 15 formally complained to the UN security Council over the Israeli incursion; in a statement the Prime Minister, Dr Selim Hoss, accused Israel of being "more responsible ... than any other party" for the "abnormal situation" in southern Lebanon because it had repeatedly refused to permit the Arab deterrent force to enforce law and order in the area. On the same day the Foreign Minister, Mr Fuad Boutros, began a series of consultations with ambassadors in Beirut, while President Sarkis called an emergency meeting of the Cabinet and condemned the Israeli action as a "violation of international principles and the rights of Lebanon and its people".

Strong condemnations of the Israeli action from all Arab Governments included an official Egyptian statement on March 15 supporting calls by Lebanon and Syria for the world powers to intervene to bring about the withdrawal of Israeli troops. Mr Mohammed Ibrahim Kamel (then Egyptian Foreign Minister) described the action as "organized genocide" and said that it would set back moves towards peace in the Middle East, although he stressed that Egypt intended to continue its peace initiative.

In a statement issued on March 15 Dr Waldheim expressed "deep concern and deplored the "violation of the boundaries of a sovereign state and the massive use of force", while on March 15–16 official Soviet statements condemning the Israeli incursion alleged that it had been carried out with "US complicity". Other reactions to the incursion included a series of protests and demonstrations by Arabs in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and also in Amman (the capital of Jordan) which led to a number of arrests being made.

On March 16 the United States, supported by Britain and other Western countries, called for an Israeli withdrawal and proposed that the Israeli troops should be replaced by an international force with a view to the southern border area eventually being patrolled by units of the Lebanese Army (currently being reorganized after its disintegration during the civil war—see page [29031](#)).

The following day the US Vice-President, Mr Walter Mondale, expressed the hope that an "alternative peace-keeping force", possibly under the auspices of the United Nations, could replace Israel's ground troops. He said that the US Administration recognized Israel's "legitimate problems of security" but stressed that it could not be allowed to remain in southern Lebanon indefinitely.

Israel's initial reaction to the proposed introduction of a UN force was one of scepticism as to its potential effectiveness. Mr Begin said on March 17 that he had "a great many doubts", while Mr Weizman said that Israel would nevertheless consider the proposal but warned that the PLO would not be allowed to operate from southern Lebanon "or even further north", adding that the best solution would be for the Palestinians to "get out of Lebanon totally".

Mr Boutros welcomed the US proposal and supported the introduction of a UN force under Lebanese authority (although Lebanese Christian leaders indicated that they wanted the Palestinians disarmed and confined to their camps).

Israel and Lebanon on March 17 made separate requests for the UN security Council to convene to discuss, respectively, the March 11 *Fatah* raid and the subsequent Israeli incursion into southern Lebanon. At the conclusion of a debate on March 19 the Council adopted, by 12 votes to none with two abstentions (the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia) and with China not participating in the vote, a resolution (425/78) the substantive passages of which were as follows:

"(1)[The Council] calls for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries;

"(2) calls upon Israel immediately to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory;

"(3) decides, in the light of the request of the Government of Lebanon, to establish immediately under its authority a United Nations Interim Force for Southern Lebanon [UNIFIL] for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area, the force to be composed of personnel drawn from member states of the United Nations.

Shortly after adopting the above resolution the security Council also adopted (by an identical vote) a resolution (426/ 78) approving a report by Dr Waldheim which specified inter alia that UNIFIL would have a six-month mandate and would carry out a "two-stage operation", the first to "confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory to the international border" and the second to "establish and maintain an area of operation as agreed to by the parties concerned"; in the latter connexion the force would "supervise the ceasefire between the parties, ensure the demilitarized character of the area of operation, control movements into and out of the area of operation and prevent the entry of unauthorized armed persons into the zone and patrol the zone". The report stressed that the force, the necessary size of which was provisionally estimated at about 4,000 men (including 1,000 logistical support personnel), would be deployed as "an interim measure until the Government of Lebanon assumes its full responsibilities in southern Lebanon".

A special session of the UN General Assembly subsequently, on April 21, approved a credit of \$54,000,000 for UNIFIL operations in the six-month period to Sept. 18, 1978, and also authorized further expenditure of up to \$6,000,000 a month until the end of October 1978 if the UNIFIL mandate was extended beyond Sept. 18. The financing resolution was approved by 99 votes to 14 (including Syria and the Soviet-bloc states except Romania), with China, Iraq and Libya being among those countries which did not participate in the vote; both the Soviet Union and China indicated that they would not be bound by the financing arrangements for expenditure on UNIFIL, which envisaged that the major share of the cost would be borne by the five permanent members of the security Council-i.e. China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States.[For further financing decisions and for later extensions of the UNIFIL mandate, see below.]

Maj.-Gen. Emmanuel E. Erskine (Ghana), Chief of Staff of the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO, which had been present in the Middle East since the 1949 Arab-Israeli armistice), was appointed interim commander of UNIFIL and subsequently joined Lt.-Gen. Ensio Siilasvuo (Finland), Chief Co-ordinator of the UN Peace-keeping Missions in the Middle East, in the co-ordination of arrangements between all parties concerned with respect to the withdrawal of Israeli troops, the deployment of UN forces and the return of refugees and displaced persons to southern Lebanon. (In connexion with the latter, Mr Weizman said on March 21 that the situation was "now under control" in the south and that those who had fled their homes could return.)

After the security Council had announced its decisions the Israeli Cabinet on March 20 took the position that any settlement must ensure that the south of Lebanon "will no longer serve as a base for the terrorists and their murderous attacks" and must guarantee "the well-being and normal way of life of the citizens of Israel and of southern Lebanon". Mr Weizman added that his country envisaged a situation "in which there will be no vacuum which will draw in destructive forces" and that the achievement of this was a matter of negotiation. Having received certain "satisfactory" assurances from the security Council, Mr Begin on March 23 affirmed that Israel would co-operate fully with the United Nations and the following day Mr Weizman said that Israeli troops would begin their withdrawal within a week.

Between March 19 and 21 it was established that UNIFIL would comprise, in addition to UNTSO personnel detached from their existing duties, Iranian, Canadian and Swedish contingents detached from service with the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on the Golan front and the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) in Sinai, as well as contingents from Norway, Nepal and France; Dr Waldheim also announced that Senegal had offered to provide a battalion and that the UK Government had offered to make available a support base in Cyprus. Subsequently, the Nigerian Government also offered to contribute a battalion to the force.

In a statement on March 22 President Giscard d'Estaing said that the French Government's decision to participate in the force (which represented a departure from previous French policy towards such operations) had been taken "to demonstrate its fidelity to the friendship which has traditionally linked us to the Lebanese people and to assist Lebanon in making its sovereignty and territorial integrity respected".

The first UNIFIL troops, a 200-strong advance party of an Iranian company serving with UNDOF accompanied by nine UNTSO observers from the Sinai, arrived in southern Lebanon on March 22 and were subsequently deployed in the central sector south of the Litani river and at the Akiya bridge over the river. The following day an advance party of the Swedish contingent (detached from UNEF) arrived in Naqoura, while the first party of the French contingent arrived in Beirut for deployment in the Tyre area, the forward headquarters of the force being established at Zaharani to the north of Tyre. In their efforts to move into Tyre and to take control of the Qasmiyah bridge over the Litani river, which the Palestinians still held, the French met with fierce resistance and by the end of the month had still not reached an agreement with the guerrillas for a peaceful takeover of the bridge. There was also delay in the deployment of the Iranian and Swedish forces because of opposition from some Christian militia (who doubted the effectiveness of the UN role in the border region and who feared that the guerrillas might be

allowed to return and would take revenge on the Christian villagers), but this was overcome after negotiations. The operation was also held up because of the difficulty in negotiating mined roads in areas around the Akiya and Khardali bridges. The explosion of one of these mines near the Khardali bridge on March 29 caused the first UNIFIL casualties, killing one Swedish soldier and wounding another. Moreover the Swedish contingent which on March 26 attempted to take up positions around the Khardali bridge was caught in cross fire and was forced to withdraw temporarily. The following day their advance to the bridge was again repelled by guerrillas, apparently backed by leftist forces.

These clashes caused Israel to delay its withdrawal and Mr Weizman on March 27 warned that Israel would take action against the Palestinians within 48 hours if they did not stop their firing and shelling. On the same day Dr Waldheim appealed to all parties to observe a general ceasefire and on March 28 Maj.-Gen. Erskine held a meeting with Mr Arafat during which the latter guaranteed that the PLO would co-operate with the United Nations in its deployment of UNIFIL forces; however, while Mr Arafat's *Al Fatah* appeared willing to consider terms for a ceasefire, other factions within the PLO, in particular the PFLP, continued to direct mortar and artillery fire at Israeli positions and warned that they would continue fighting until the Israelis had withdrawn completely.

The UNIFIL force, which by March 29 numbered 1,100 men from Iran, France, Sweden and Norway, continued to meet with resistance in their attempts to set up positions in the south, and on April 1 Swedish and Norwegian troops in the Arqoub came under heavy fire from Palestinian forces, after which Maj.-Gen. Erskine declared that the peace-keeping soldiers had been ordered to fire "if necessary" on Palestinians who tried to return to the area which they had cleared. Norwegian troops came under fire again the following week—on April 5 at the Khardali bridge (where they had replaced Swedish troops) and on April 7 at Kawkaba in the Arqoub, when they responded with machine-gun fire.

Israel on April 7 announced plans for a partial withdrawal from southern Lebanon, which it subsequently carried out on April 11 and April 14, allowing UNIFIL troops to take over evacuated Israeli positions around Marjayoun, in the Arqoub, at the Arkiya bridge and in a number of villages between Taibe' and Ghatadourieh. By that time some 2,500 UN troops had been deployed in the south of the country and Mr Begin made it clear that the degree of Israel's further withdrawal would depend on the number of UNIFIL men stationed there and their ability to keep out Palestinian guerrillas.

Dr Waldheim on April 18 accepted Israel's insistence that its withdrawal should not be immediate and also said that he would ask the security Council to increase to 6,000 the number of troops ultimately to be stationed in southern Lebanon. In response to this pledge Israel on the same day said that it would carry out another phase of its withdrawal "in two weeks' time", which would include evacuation of areas overlooking Tyre and Rashadiyah and would bring all Israeli forces back to within a line about 6 miles north of the border with Lebanon.

The UN security Council on May 3, 1978, approved Dr Waldheim's proposal to increase the size of UNIFIL by 2,000 men (i.e. to 6,000), the majority of whom were to come from the Irish

Republic, Iran and Fiji. The decision was taken once more by 12 votes to none with the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia abstaining and China declining to participate in the vote.

The decision to increase the size of UNIFIL was taken following the death on May 1 of three Senegalese soldiers, whose jeep had run over a landmine near Tyre, and the killing of three more UNIFIL soldiers the following day by a hitherto unknown guerrilla group called the "Popular Front for the Liberation of South Lebanon", which was understood to have close links with the "rejectionist" wing of the PLO. (According to the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* of May 8 this group had been established by Libya with Iraqi support with the aim of continuing hostilities against the Israeli forces, their right-wing Christian allies and the UN troops.)

In the May 2 incident, which was described as the most serious clash to date involving UNIFIL soldiers, members of the guerrilla group opened fire on the base of French parachute troops near Tyre and ambushed a nearby convoy of UN soldiers. One Senegalese, two French soldiers and a Palestinian liaison officer were killed and nine UNIFIL soldiers were badly injured, the latter including Col. Jean Germain Salvan, commander of the French forces, who was transported to a hospital by Palestinians and who was subsequently replaced by Lt.-Col. Dominique Viard. The guerrilla attack appeared to be in retaliation for an incident on April 30, also near Tyre, in which French soldiers had killed at least one Arab gunman and wounded two others.

In view of the hostilities against the UN troops near Tyre a redeployment of the French and Senegalese units was subsequently carried out in the area on May 9–10 and the UNIFIL headquarters were transferred from Zaharani to Naqoura (on the coast some two miles north of the Israeli border).

In the course of talks between Mr Arafat and Maj.-Gen. Erskine on May 5, the PLO chairman was understood to have pledged that those responsible for the attack on May 2 would be arrested and punished (a number of suspects having been detained by the Palestinian security forces on May 4) and to have reiterated his assurances that the Palestinians would co-operate with the United Nations.

A meeting was held between Lebanese and Palestinian leaders on May 24 following which the PLO issued a five-point statement in which it undertook inter alia not to oppose, nor to let "undisciplined" elements oppose, the UN mission in the south of Lebanon and the re-establishment of Lebanese sovereignty in that area. Moreover, Palestinian sources revealed on May 29 that Mr Arafat had formed a 500-man strike force to be deployed in the southern border region under the command of Maj. Azmi Zghayyar with instructions to "intervene immediately to help UNIFIL quell any guerrilla attempt to infiltrate into Israeli-vacated areas". However, despite efforts by Mr Arafat to gain the co-operation of all Palestinian forces, the more radical guerrilla groups warned that they would continue to penetrate UNIFIL lines and would step up their campaign against Israel from the south of Lebanon in defiance of the five-point accord.

Following a cabinet meeting on May 21 Israel announced its intention to withdraw all its soldiers from southern Lebanon by June 13 on condition (i) that the Palestinian guerrillas would not be allowed to return; (ii) that there would be no further attacks against Israel and its citizens; and (iii) that the inhabitants of southern Lebanon were guaranteed security.

The Israeli conditions created difficulties in that it had been reported on May 16–17 that more guerrillas had infiltrated UNIFIL lines near Mount Hermon and Tyre (the Lebanese right-wing daily *Al Amal* of May 17 putting the total at 300); moreover, a number of left-wing Moslems who had fled both before and during the Israeli occupation had since been authorized to return to their villages in the south, where they were expected to continue their support for the Palestinian resistance.

Furthermore, the security of the Christian enclaves in the south after the Israeli withdrawal had still not been guaranteed, there being, at the time of Israel's announcement of May 21, no signs that the Lebanese Army was ready to assume a peacekeeping role in the south.

In connexion with the deployment of Lebanese forces President Sarkis and President Assad of Syria, in the course of a meeting in Syria on May 31–June 1, agreed that the reconstructed Lebanese Army would play a major role in enforcing security in the country and would thereby reassert the authority of the Lebanese Government and prepare for the eventual withdrawal of the Arab deterrent force. At the same meeting the two Presidents also discussed the possibility of sending Syrian troops of the deterrent force to the south of Lebanon (i.e. south of the "red line") to assist the Lebanese Army in its duties. The deployment of units of the Lebanese Army in the south was, however, rejected by the Lebanese National Front (the coalition of left-wing Moslem forces under the leadership of Mr Walid Jumblatt), which protested that the Army was currently an "instrument in the hands of the Christians"

During the night of June 8–9, 1978, an Israeli commando force of about 150 men raided and destroyed a *Fatah* base at Aaqbiyeh on the Lebanese coast some six miles south of Sidon. Reports on the casualties inflicted during the attack were conflicting, but it was thought that at least five Palestinians and two Israelis were killed. Lebanese sources also reported civilian casualties but these were denied by Israel.

The Israeli Army said that the raid had been launched after information had been received that guerrillas were planning an attack from Aaqbiyeh on Israeli territory. Palestinian sources denied this and also Israeli allegations that the base was an important arms depot and guerrilla training camp. The Israelis said that all the aims of the mission had been achieved, although the Palestinians, while admitting that they had been taken by surprise, claimed that only 19 of their men had been in the base at the time of the attack.

Dr Waldheim on June 9 expressed his deep regret at the Israeli action, which had come "at a time when all interest is centred on the efforts concerning the implementation of ... Resolution 425 in southern Lebanon". Mr Yigael Yadin (Israeli Deputy Prime Minister) on June 9 rejected conjecture that the raid had been a reprisal for an explosion on a bus in Jerusalem on June 2 which had killed six people[see below] and defended the action as a demonstration "that no border is able to protect terrorists".

By June 13, when there were about 5,500 UNIFIL soldiers stationed in southern Lebanon, the Israelis had withdrawn all their remaining troops from Lebanese territory. However, whereas UNIFIL forces had moved into positions vacated in the earlier Israeli withdrawal, most of the final Israeli positions close to the border were handed over to Lebanese Christian forces, a

ceremonial transfer of fortified positions being carried out on June 12 in Meiss el Jebel in the central border area.

Israeli spokesmen had on June 11 stated that the areas controlled by the Christians would not be included in the positions to be transferred to UNIFIL, arguing that UNIFIL had been stationed in the south "to prevent terrorist infiltrators" and not "to oppose the defenders of the Christian enclaves". They also maintained that Israeli troops had not occupied most of the Lebanese Christian positions, and therefore were not in a position to hand them over to UNIFIL.

The Christian forces, totalling between 1,500 and 2,500 men under the command of Maj. Saad Haddad, were entrenched in an eight-mile strip in a predominantly Moslem area along the border with Israel. Prior to Israel's withdrawal Maj. Haddad, who claimed that his forces were strong enough to control the entire border region, had been instructed by UN officers to confine his militiamen to barracks in Marjayoun and Koleya and to allow all security duties to be entrusted to the UNIFIL troops pending the arrival of the Lebanese Army. However, a confrontation between the UN force and the Christians was avoided when the UN command on June 12 agreed that the Christian militia could retain their arms, while Maj. Haddad gave assurances that the UN force would be permitted to patrol the border zone, maintain an undefined presence in Christian and Shia Moslem villages and man certain operation posts in the area. Notwithstanding these pledges the movement and supply of the UN soldiers was thereafter frequently restricted by Christian forces.

During its occupation of southern Lebanon Israel had built a network of roads connecting Christian villages with each other and with Israel, thereby facilitating Christian protection against possible Palestinian or Lebanese leftist attacks and enabling the Israelis to make a quick return to the area. Israel had repeatedly stressed its commitment to the defence of the Christian community, to whom it was also believed to have transferred large quantities of arms.

Immediately after the final Israeli withdrawal Mr Moshe Dayan (the Israeli Foreign Minister), in a letter to Dr Waldheim, complained that UN troops had permitted guerrillas to return to the areas which Israel had just vacated, that "hundreds" of Palestinians were currently in the border area and that the UN was acting "indulgently" towards them. UNIFIL sources rejected these allegations and maintained that there had been no increased penetration of armed guerrillas during the preceding two weeks. In a reply to Mr Dayan's letter Dr Waldheim pointed out that the task of UNIFIL had not been helped by Israel's refusal to surrender the evacuated territory completely into the hands of the peace-keeping force.

The UN Security Council on Sept. 18, 1978, voted by 12 to none (with the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia again abstaining and China not participating in the vote) to extend the mandate of the UNIFIL force for a further four months. The resolution extending the mandate expressed concern that the UN force had encountered obstacles in attempting to deploy itself in its area of operation and that the full control of the Lebanese Government had not yet been restored over all Lebanese territory; at the same time the resolution noted that progress had been achieved by UNIFIL towards the establishment of peace and security in southern Lebanon. In an identical vote on Jan. 19, 1979, the UNIFIL mandate was extended for a further five months.

Earlier, on Dec. 8, 1978, the security Council had approved a report by Dr Waldheim which stated that there had been little recent progress in securing full deployment of the UN force in areas of southern Lebanon where Israel had handed over control to "de facto armed groups" (i.e. Christian militia) when it withdrew in June. A consensus statement read out by the Council President, Herr Rudiger von Wechmar (West Germany), called upon "all those not fully co-operating with UNIFIL, particularly Israel, to desist forthwith from interfering with UNIFIL's operations in southern Lebanon" and demanded that they "comply fully without any delay" with Resolutions 425 and 426 of March 19, 1978.

For the further financing of UNIFIL, the UN General Assembly on Nov. 3 (under Resolution 33/14, adopted by 114 votes to 13 with four abstentions) appropriated \$44,568,000 for the period from Sept. 19, 1978, to Jan. 18, 1979, and authorized the UN Secretary-General to enter into commitments at a rate of not more than \$11,142,000 per month for the period from Jan. 19 to Oct. 31, 1979; at the same time the Assembly voted an additional \$6,900,000 for the period of the first mandate. The resolution was opposed by Albania, Cuba, Iraq, Syria and the Soviet bloc except Romania-which voted for the resolution; Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe and North Yemen abstained, while China took no part in the voting.

After the Israeli military authorities had admitted on April 9 that Israeli forces had used US-made anti-personnel "cluster" bombs during their operations in Lebanon, a US State Department spokesman confirmed on April 14 that further supplies of the weapon to Israel had been halted pending the establishment of new conditions governing its use. Earlier, the US Secretary of State, Mr Cyrus Vance, had on April 5 notified Congress that Israel "may have" violated the 1952 US-Israel defence assistance agreement [see 12468 B] under which US arms supplied to Israel were to be used solely for defence or internal security purposes-although in view of Israel's undertaking to effect a speedy withdrawal from southern Lebanon he was "not recommending any further action".

Since the early 1970s the United States was reported to have supplied Israel with over 20,000 cluster bomb units (CBUs-each housing dozens of grenades which on exploding scatter steel splinters over a wide area). Whereas the Israeli military statement of April 9 claimed that the bomb had been used against sources of artillery and rocket fire directed against northern Israel, widespread use of the device against Palestinian camps and Lebanese civilian targets had been reported by Western journalists and other eye-witnesses. On April 21 Mr Weizman admitted that the use of CBUs had been a "mishap of sorts" and said that he had not been informed of an Israeli commitment (reportedly given to the United States in December 1976) that the weapon would only be used **in** the event of a general war in which Israel was attacked by more than one country.

Subsequently, it was reported in the US press on May 12 that Israel had entered into an agreement—the details of which were classified—renewing its pledge not to use US-supplied cluster bombs except in special wartime conditions.