

*Emergency
meeting
of Security
Council*

battle area. The Israeli purpose was largely accomplished. However, the already chaotic and inflammable situation in Lebanon, involving an ineffectual central government, civil war between Christian, Moslem and Palestinian forces in and around Beirut and a forcibly interventionist Syrian army of 30,000 men acting as a Pan-Arab peacekeeping force, was made even more explosive by Israel's action. It also threatened direct confrontation between Syrian and Israeli forces.

Denying any responsibility for the Palestinian commando operation, Lebanon brought the issue to the attention of the Secretary-General on March 15 and on March 17 called for an emergency meeting of the Security Council. Israel, charging "continuous acts of terror and violence", did the same. A meeting of the Security Council in which Lebanon, several other Arab states, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel were invited to participate, was called immediately into session.

UNIFIL mandate

In the highly-charged atmosphere, the debate was characterized by rhetoric, propaganda, charge and counter-charge. Even so, the draft resolution submitted by the United States was adopted by a vote of 12 in favour, with Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union abstaining and China, which was opposed to the idea of peacekeeping, not participating in the vote. Resolution 425 called on Israel "immediately to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith . . . [and decided] to establish immediately under its authority a United Nations interim force for southern Lebanon 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 this area". Though it charged Israel with aggression and was unwilling to agree that UN troops be given functions "not proper to them in regard to the transfer of effective authority in that region to the Government of Lebanon", the Soviet Union did not veto the resolution, on the grounds of the support it had received from Lebanon and other Arab states.

The mandate was further defined and elaborated by the Secretary-General's report, which was adopted as Resolution 426. The size of the force was set at 4,000. The operational guidelines adopted were those for the two peacekeeping forces in the Middle East — the United Nations Emergency Force in the Sinai (UNEF)

and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force on the Golan Heights (UNDOF) —, with the renunciation of force except in self-defence, which includes "resistance to attempts by forceful means to prevent it from discharging its duties under the mandate". The expenses of the force were established as expenses of the organization under Article 17, Paragraph 2, in the amount of \$54 million. Following the pattern of UNEF and UNDOF, the General Assembly assessed the membership states, from the most-developed to the least-developed, in amounts of descending order.

Effectively, UNIFIL was charged with the formidable task of intervening in a critical situation, both domestic and international. It was introduced into the area before the establishment of a ceasefire, which it had to ensure and confirm. It was to supervise the withdrawal of Israeli forces and ensure the absence of hostilities over a densely-populated area of 450 square miles. UNIFIL is far more than a force interposed between the parties that have agreed in advance the general objectives of a peacekeeping mandate. Domestic Lebanese politics, and instability of the Government, the activity of the PLO and the support it receives from friendly states, the strength of Christian forces and the support they receive from Israel, the purposes and activities of the powerful Syrian military presence in Lebanon and the persistent civil war that involves all parties on the battleground — all these are factors affecting the outcome of UNIFIL's mandate in southern Lebanon. It must, therefore, engage in sensitive political negotiations with both state and non-state actors are subject to erratic and volatile political and military behaviour. The scene is reminiscent of the Congo in 1960-1961. Since the successful operation of UNIFIL cannot but contribute to the Israeli objective of ridding southern Lebanon of forces hostile to Israel, the difficulty of UN in steering a neutral course is patent.

All this UNIFIL was called upon to accomplish under circumstances in which the U.S.S.R. disagreed with the transfer of effective authority to the Government of Lebanon, which, if carried out, would have eliminated the PLO from the area it had used as a staging-ground for raids in Israel. The Soviet Union also expressed grave reservations about paying its assessment for the force, and closely monitored the activities of the Secretary-General to ensure that all would be done with the approval of the Security Council. The Secretary-General was forced to act with