

LATE LAST WEEK THE PRIME MINISTER RECEIVED BY TELEPHONE AN URGENT REQUEST FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ASKING CANADA TO PROVIDE A CONTINGENT OF SIGNALLERS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON.

FOLLOWING CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BY THE GOVERNMENT, THE PRIME MINISTER TELEPHONED MR. WALDHEIM TUESDAY, APRIL 11 AND INFORMED HIM THAT WE AGREED TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THIS REQUEST ONCE CERTAIN CONDITIONS WERE CLARIFIED.

YESTERDAY I WENT TO NEW YORK AND MET WITH UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL BRIAN URQUHART AND SEVERAL U.N. OFFICIALS TO GAIN AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION AND THE PROSPECTS FOR UNIFIL AND TO DISCUSS IN DETAIL THE NATURE OF THE TASK EXPECTED OF CANADA. AS A RESULT OF THIS MEETING, THE GOVERNMENT IS SATISFIED THAT THIS IS A TASK WE CAN AND WILL ACCOMMODATE. WE WILL SET UP A COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK FOR UNIFIL SIMILAR TO THOSE WE OPERATE IN OTHER PEACEKEEPING UNITS IN THE MIDDLE EAST NAMELY UNEF AND UNDOF. THE FACT THAT WE ARE ALREADY ENGAGED IN THIS ACTIVITY IN THE AREA MEANS THAT, NOT ONLY DO WE HAVE THE CAPABILITY AND THE EXPERIENCE BUT ALSO WE ARE ABLE TO USE LESS MANPOWER THAN WOULD OTHERWISE BE REQUIRED.