



STATEMENT DISCOURS

SECRETARY
OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS.

SECRÉTAIRE
D'ÉTAT AUX
AFFAIRES
EXTÉRIEURES.

STATEMENT BY
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
THE HONOURABLE DON JAMIESON,
TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND
AND NATIONAL DEFENCE, OTTAWA,
APRIL 13, 1978

"CANADIAN PARTICIPATION
IN UNIFIL"

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.

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE UNIFIL OPERATION, OUR POSITION HAS BEEN CLEAR AND CONSISTENT. INITIALLY WE DEPLOYED 35 OF OUR FORCES ALREADY IN THE AREA TO FACILITATE THE ARRIVAL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FORCE. WE SAID THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO CONSIDER SYMPATHETICALLY A REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN UNIFIL PROVIDED WE HAD THE CAPACITY TO PERFORM THE ROLE REQUESTED AND WERE SATISFIED THAT THE CONDITIONS WERE SUCH THAT OUR PERFORMANCE WOULD BE EFFECTIVE.

WE DO HAVE THE CAPACITY, ALBEIT LIMITED, AND WHILE THERE ARE RISKS, AS THERE ALWAYS WILL BE IN EXERCISES OF THIS KIND, I AM CONVINCED THAT THE MANDATE AND OPERATIONS OF THE FORCE ARE SUCH THAT WE ARE NEEDED. IN FACT, AS I WAS TOLD YESTERDAY IN NEW YORK, THE SIGNALLERS ARE "THE LIFELINE" OF THE FORCE.

CANADA SUPPORTED THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL WHICH ESTABLISHED UNIFIL. THE FORCE CONSISTS OF CONTINGENTS FROM FRANCE AND NORWAY, WITH TEMPORARY SUPPORT FROM IRAN, SWEDEN AND CANADA. I WAS INFORMED YESTERDAY THAT FURTHER CONTINGENTS FROM SENEGAL, NEPAL AND NIGERIA ARE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE SOON. WE HAVE AGREED TO SEND APPROXIMATELY 80 SIGNALLERS TO ESTABLISH A COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK. RECOGNIZING THE EXTENT OF OUR EXISTING LOGISTICS OPERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THE SECRETARY GENERAL HAS ASKED US TO PROVIDE THIS SERVICE ONLY UNTIL OCTOBER 1, 1978. WE HAVE AGREED TO DO SO.

I AM HOPEFUL THAT ALL PARTIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL ADHERE TO THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL

AND WILL COOPERATE FULLY WITH UNIFIL SO THAT THE UN FORCE CAN FULFILL THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF ITS MANDATE: "TO CONFIRM THE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES, RESTORE INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY AND ASSIST THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON IN ENSURING THE RETURN OF ITS EFFECTIVE AUTHORITY IN THE AREA".

I AM SURE CANADIANS RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONTRIBUTION WE ARE ALREADY MAKING TO PEACEKEEPING. IT IS A FIELD IN WHICH CANADIAN FORCES HAVE A PROUD TRADITION. WE HAVE BEEN PIONEERS AND HAVE SEEN PEACEKEEPING AS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS. I KNOW THAT CANADIANS AS A WHOLE SHARE MY PRIDE IN THE ROLES WE HAVE ALREADY UNDERTAKEN. I KNOW TOO THAT CANADIANS RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT OUR WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND TO AN URGENT REQUEST FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL IN THE MANNER WE HAVE. WE ATTACH THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE TO THE SUCCESS OF UN PEACEKEEPING ACTIVITIES. WITH THIS DECISION TO PARTICIPATE TEMPORARILY IN UNIFIL THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO DO ITS PART IN ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT PEACEKEEPING VENTURES THE UN HAS UNDERTAKEN. IT IS A CHALLENGE WE CAN AND SHOULD ACCEPT.