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**UNIFIL IN LEBANON: THE PAST AND THE FUTURE**

**BY**

**COLONEL JAMAL EL-HAJJ**

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**UNIFIL in Lebanon: The Past and the Future**

by

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## ABSTRACT

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Lebanon and the United Nations celebrated the 20th anniversary of the approval by the UN Security Council of Resolutions 425 and 426 on March 19, 1998. These two resolutions were adopted by the Security Council in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon in March of 1978 in order to establish the United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL) to insure:

- The cessation of hostilities
- The withdrawal of the Israeli forces
- The restoration of Lebanese authority

Although neither of these resolutions has yet been fully implemented, UNIFIL's presence in South Lebanon has nevertheless had some positive impact on the situation there, especially at the human and economic level. This paper examines two questions dealing with the past record of UNIFIL and with its future:

What kind, and to what extent, has UNIFIL provided security and well-being to the indigenous population?

What kind of successful approach should it be found in the region to the UNIFIL to accomplish its Mission?



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Israel is a cancer in the Lebanese body. It has to be removed.

— Popular Lebanese Saying

## **BACKGROUND**

For many years the Muslim and Christian communities in Lebanon lived and worked together in relative harmony, avoided damaging involvement in Middle East disputes, and made Lebanon an island of prosperity and relative peace in a troubled area. Between 1975 and 1990, however, a savage civil war destroyed much of Beirut and shredded the political fabric that had worked so well in the past. Since the end of the civil war in 1990, Lebanon has been rebuilding politically and economically. The situation in South Lebanon and the tensions with Israel remain, however.

Some observers claim that had external agents not intervened, Lebanon's Muslim and Christian communities would have been able to arrive at an acceptable political formula much sooner and at much less cost than was the case. There is no doubt that the intervention of non-Lebanese actors, whether directly (with force) or indirectly (with financial assistance for their respective Lebanese clients) expanded the intra-Lebanese conflict to the regional level and made its resolution more difficult. Israelis, Palestinians, some Arab states, and obviously some superpowers, each had some interests at stake in Lebanon and each insisted on being directly involved.



## **Roots of the conflict**

These can be identified by two factors:

- Israel's historical desire for Lebanese water (an issue not discussed in this paper).
- The massive Palestinian presence in Lebanon.

## **History**

Following the Arab defeat in 1967, it became obvious that Egyptian president Gamal Nasser would not be the man who would lead the Palestinians back to their homeland. For this reason, a new, militant Palestinian nationalism arose, intent on expressing its moral purpose through the barrel of gun. Following the occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel, Palestinian fighters, then based in Jordan, launched attacks into Israeli territory.

In addition to fighting Israelis, these Palestinian fighters and their parent organization, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), also came into armed conflict with their hosts in Jordan. As a consequence of fighting between the Jordanian armed forces and the PLO in early 1970, the Palestinian fighters were sent to Lebanon where the government, in accordance with the Cairo agreement signed by the Lebanese Army and the PLO, had given the PLO authority to use an area in southern Lebanon called Fatehland as a base of operations against Israel.<sup>1</sup>

Large numbers of Palestinian refugees had been located in Lebanon since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 in

camps run by the United Nations Relief Works Administration (UNRWA). Now the bulk of PLO fighters were moved to the area south of the Litani river in southern Lebanon where three major Palestinian camps had been located since the creation of Israel and the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948-49.

Not long after they arrived in Lebanon, the PLO fighters began conducting raids across the Israeli-Lebanese armistice line into Israel and these resulted in Israeli retaliatory attacks against targets in Lebanon.

In 1975 civil war broke out in Lebanon itself between the Christians and the Muslims. The Lebanese Government collapsed, and its security forces were disbanded. The PLO participated in the fight by providing assistance to the Muslims. The chaotic situation that prevailed permitted the Palestinians to act with relative impunity and near complete freedom in South Lebanon, and the PLO raids and Israeli counterraided increased. The United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization (UNTSO) observers that had been deployed on the armistice line between Lebanon and Israel since 1949<sup>2</sup> were totally helpless. Israel had stopped recognizing the line as the tension continued to increase despite the cease-fire that had been arranged by the UNTSO in April 1972 following a large-scale artillery exchange on Lebanon's southern international border.

**First Israeli Invasion.** On March 11, 1978, the PLO launched a commando raid on Israel near the city of Haifa in northern

Israel. In the ensuing confrontation with the Israeli forces, nine guerrillas and 37 Israelis were killed.<sup>3</sup> In retaliation, Israeli forces invaded Lebanon (Operation Litani) on the night of March 14/15 and in a few days occupied the entire region south of Litani river except for the city of Tyr and its surrounding area.

**Establishment of UNIFIL.** On March 15, 1978, the Lebanese Government submitted a strong protest to the United Nations Security Council. The Security Council met on March 17 and in the following days to consider the Lebanese complaint with the major parties taking different position:

The United States, which sought to contain the crisis in Lebanon so as not to endanger the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations then underway, saw a peacekeeping force as a way to provide Israel with a chance to retreat from Lebanon.

The PLO and Syria did not explicitly support the establishment of such a force during the Security Council's debate (although later they agreed to the creation of UNIFIL when Tyr was not included in the UNIFIL area of operation).

The Arab States wanted a resolution that condemned the Israeli action in stronger language.

The Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies agreed to UNIFIL but withheld their share of the cost of UNIFIL, as they wanted the costs to be borne by Israel alone.

France supported the establishment of UNIFIL. China did not participate in the debate.

A draft resolution on the Israeli invasion, agreed by the Lebanese Government and sponsored by the United States, was adopted as the Security Council as resolution 425 on March 19, 1978. The text of resolution 425 is in Annex IV.

On the same day, the Security Council passed Resolution 426 that established a UN peacekeeping force: the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), with a total strength 4,000 for an initial six-month period.<sup>4</sup> The text of resolution 426 is in Annex IV.

UNIFIL assured the Israeli withdrawal from most areas of Lebanon by June 13, 1978.<sup>5</sup> In this last phase, the Israelis opted to keep the area in South Lebanon close to their border, the so-called Security Zone, under the control of pro-Israeli Lebanese militias.

**Second Israeli Invasion.** On June 6, 1982, after two days of intense exchanges of fire in South Lebanon and across the Israeli-Lebanese border, Israeli forces again moved into Lebanese territory in strength. Israelis overran or bypassed UNIFIL positions and reached and surrounded Beirut which they proceeded to subject to three months of heavy and deadly bombardment from the air, sea and land that appeared to be random and indiscriminate.<sup>6</sup>

Negotiations led by U.S. envoy Phillip Habib resulted in the deployment of a multinational force (MNF) to Lebanon not, however, under a UN mandate. It was composed of brigade-size

units from the United States, France, Italy and a company-size unit from the UK.<sup>7</sup>

The MNF's mission was to assure the withdrawal of Syrian and Palestinian forces, to protect the population and to help the Lebanese Government to restore order. After its mission was accomplished and the PLO had moved to Tunisia, the MNF withdrew on September 13, 1982.

On the evening of September 16, 1982, however, the Christian (Phalangist) Militia massacred some 800 civilian Palestinians in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in Beirut.<sup>8</sup> That was the reason for the MNF to return to Beirut,<sup>9</sup> designated MNF II with double the size of the previous MNF I and to stay until it withdrew gradually in 1984. MNF II sustained several casualties including the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in October 1983 due to the complex internal situation which reoccurred in Lebanon.<sup>10</sup>

By mid-1985 Israel redeployed its forces out of Beirut and to the international borders, while keeping the ten-mile-wide "Security Zone" under the control of the Lebanese militia it backed. During this period UNIFIL continued to operate in its area in South Lebanon but was not directly involved in efforts to stop or contain the fighting in and around Beirut.

## **ORGANIZATION AND MISSION OF UNIFIL**

As specified in Resolution 425 and later Resolution 511, the mission of UNIFIL is as follows:

- Confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon.
- Restore international peace and security.
- Assist the Government of Lebanon in ensuring an effective return of authority.
- Use its best efforts to prevent the recurrence of fighting and to insure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind.
- To protect and render humanitarian aid to the population.

**Geographic Orientation.** The UNIFIL area of operations is bounded by the 1949 armistice demarcation line on the south and east, and by the Litani river on the north.

For historical reasons, UNIFIL has never deployed in the Tyr pocket, and because of the Israeli occupation, it has been unable to deploy in the south and east into the Israeli-controlled area (ICA) or Security Zone as Israel terms it. (See map in Annex I.)

**Operations.** Unlike most UN peacekeeping operations, UNIFIL was planned and implemented in a rush and its units were deployed into a highly volatile tension in the absence of the agreement of both Israel and the PLO. The UNIFIL deployment was simplified, however, by the presence of other UN missions in the Middle East.

General Emanuel Erskine, Chief of the United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization (UNTSO), was assigned as the first

UNIFIL Commander on March 19, 1978. The first military deployment started on March 21 with setting up UNIFIL's headquarters in Naqoura on the Lebanese side of the Lebanese-Israeli border, along with 45 observers from the Observer Group Lebanon (OGL) and Observer Group Egypt (OGE) of the UNTSO, followed by three rifle companies -- Iranians, Swedes, and Canadians from the UN Emergency Force (UNEF II) -- and later, starting from March 23, by French, Irish, and Senegalese soldiers.

On the recommendation of the UN Secretary General, the size of the Force was increased from 4,000 to 6,000 by UNSC Resolution 427 of May 3, 1978 and to 7,000 in February 1982.

**Rules Of Engagement.** Being a peacekeeping force, UNIFIL's weapons are persuasion, negotiation, show of force and stubborn insistence on its duty to carry out tasks assigned to it by the Security Council.

Its strengths lie in the moral force it possesses as the expression of the will of the international community, its awareness of the local complexities, its speed of response, and the physical protection that it can provide for itself.

**Command and Control.** The initial UNIFIL Force Commander, General Erskine, served from March 19, 1978 to February 14, 1981. He was succeeded by Lieutenant General William Callaghan of Ireland who served from February 15, 1981 to May 31, 1986. Other Force commanders have included Major General Gustave Hugglund of Finland, Lieutenant General Lars-Eric Wahlgreen of Sweden,

General Trond Furuhovde of Norway; Major General Wladeslaw Vosniak of Poland and, from mid-1997, Major General Jioji K. Konrote of Fiji. The UNTSO personnel attached to UNIFIL and organized as Observer Group Lebanon (OGL) are under the Force Commander's operational control. UNIFIL maintains contact and cooperation with the Lebanese authorities and liaison and communications with the Lebanese Army.

**UNIFIL's composition of forces.** Although UNIFIL's original mandate called for a total strength of 4,000 troops, the number of troops was changed often, increasing to a maximum of approximately 7,000 in early 1982. As of April 1997, UNIFIL consisted of 5,244 military personnel.<sup>11</sup> The force is composed of infantry battalions, military police, a mobile force reserve, a maintenance company, an engineer company, a logistics battalion and a medical unit. The national composition of the troops changes frequently: in mid-1997 the countries contributing troops included: Fiji(651), Finland(524), France(441), Ghana(788), Ireland(677), Italy(42 as Italair), Nepal(723), Norway(831), and Poland(567 includes the medical staff).<sup>12</sup> The mission is supported by 528 civilian staff. The Observer Group Lebanon (OGL) of the UNTSO, attached to UNIFIL and under its operational control, consists of 59 UNTSO military observers.

**Cost.** The annual cost of UNIFIL is approximately \$146 million. These expenses were to be borne by UN member states as apportioned by the General Assembly, but many have refused to



pay, which has caused UNIFIL's special account to run at a deficit. Consequently, the UN has fallen behind in reimbursing governments for costs incurred in contributing troops, equipment and supplies. The estimated budget for the fiscal year 1996-1997 was \$139.7 million but only \$122.7 million was approved.

**Casualties:** By early 1998, UNIFIL has incurred a high number of casualties, with some 218 troops killed either in operations or different incidents since 1978.<sup>13</sup>

#### **SOCIAL INTERACTION BETWEEN UNIFIL AND LEBANON**

**Humanitarian Assistance.** The provision of humanitarian assistance to the local population has been an important task for UNIFIL since the initial deployment of the Force. During the first mandate period in 1978, an emergency relief and reconstruction program for South Lebanon, coordinated by a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for humanitarian assistance, was in operation.

A humanitarian section was set up at UNIFIL Headquarters to provide liaison for all aspects of the UN assistance program and to assist the Special Representative. A humanitarian officer was also assigned to each battalion for such purposes.

The humanitarian effort became more important during the period between the second Israeli invasion on June 6, 1982 and the partial withdrawal of Israeli forces from South Lebanon in

1985 when UNIFIL could do very little to implement the other parts of its original mandate.

Part of the UNIFIL mandate is to carry out, with the consent of the Government of Lebanon, interim tasks in the humanitarian and administrative fields to restore normal social and economic life in the area of operations. The underlying principle behind UNIFIL humanitarian efforts is that humanitarian aid, in its own right, decreases tension among the population, strengthens relations between the units and the local population and gives UNIFIL a visible role as a source of benefits for the local people.<sup>14</sup>

There is, however, no allotment in the UNIFIL budget for humanitarian tasks. All of UNIFIL's units, strive, however, to render as much help as possible, both from funds provided from their home governments and from the unit's own resources in addition to supporting the humanitarian programs of other UN agencies.

**Forms of Humanitarian Assistance.** UNIFIL's humanitarian activities can be divided into the following areas:

- assistance to other UN-based organizations or non-governmental organizations, as well as to local authorities, in carrying out their projects in UNIFIL's area of operations.
- medical assistance for the local population.
- assistance from UNIFIL's resources.

Also UNIFIL provided important humanitarian assistance during the different Israeli large-scale aggressions (especially in 1993 and 1996).

**Examples of UNIFIL's Humanitarian Efforts.** The single event that best exemplifies UNIFIL's aid to the Lebanese people was its response to the shelling in April 1996 of an encampment of 1,500 civilian refugees, most of them women, children and old men, who had been given shelter in the UN Fijian position in the village of Qana. A terrible massacre was caused by Israeli artillery shelling the UNIFIL position and the refugee shelters: 145 civilians were killed and a number of other civilians and UNIFIL soldiers were badly wounded.<sup>15</sup> In addition to dealing with the immediate effects of the attack, UNIFIL also:

- provided 10,500 food rations, worth \$85,000, and medical supplies worth \$55,000 to these refugees;
- transported water in UNIFIL trucks, on a priority basis, to villages where the water supply systems were damaged due to the shelling.
- provided tents, blankets and mattresses in some villages.
- provided assistance by the Swedish engineer company and the Norwegian maintenance company with their machinery to clear roads, fill craters and clear collapsed buildings in the most seriously damaged villages.
- fed abandoned domestic animals, and cleared and buried the carcasses of others.

- fumigated the affected areas by the Polish medical hygiene team, thus preventing a widespread outbreak of disease.
- disposed of artillery and mortar shells found in the local villages by the bomb disposal teams of each Battalion.<sup>16</sup>

Overall, the most important thing was the fact that UNIFIL soldiers shared the experiences of war with the local people. This brought them closer than ever before and created an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence.

In normal situations, UNIFIL was able, with the assistance of other UN-based organizations, mainly UNDP, to deliver supplies such as kitchen sets, heaters, generators, water tanks, photocopiers and typewriters and stationary to schools, clinics and community centers.

In respect of the above work, UNIFIL prepared contract documents, supervised work in progress, took over completed work and arranged for payment to be made to contractors for work completed.

Medical evacuation exercises were carried out in cooperation with the local Red Cross and non-governmental organizations. UNIFIL Medical Officers treat approximately 3000 local patients per month and dental services were always provided.<sup>17</sup>

Apart of all the above work, UNIFIL managed to restore peace and security in its area of operations, in the sense of making it the safest area for the civilian population in Lebanon throughout

the civil war, a fact which was evidenced by the return of locals to their home villages.

Since the first deployment, small stores have been set up, notably a proliferation of small makeshift shops selling hi-fi equipment, gold jewelry, clothes, pirated cassettes, and cheap liquor or providing services designed especially for UN personnel. Carts, wagons, during daytime or even late in evenings, travel around positions for home delivery of services.

**The Human Dimension.** Any observer in the area will notice the wonderful human relationships that are displayed when local citizens pass through checkpoints, opening social dialogues with soldiers and even calling them by their names. These exchange often lead to social relationships and further to family visits.

Unit commanders have set up a chain of official relations with local Lebanese authorities, mainly with Mokhtars (village notaries), mayors, and officers at local police stations.

UNIFIL's representatives at local celebrations of national holidays and other ceremonies have as well become fixed parts of the local scene.

As a normal consequence of those human relations, many marriages have taken place, mostly men from UNIFIL with local girls (43 cases through mid-1996, 38 of them involving Norwegian soldiers).

But the most significant human relations are those that can be seen when a former UNIFIL soldier comes back to South Lebanon

to check about old friends or returns along with his family and some friends from home for tourism purposes.

To illustrate the kind of relations existing between local populations and UNIFIL soldiers, the comment of one Lebanese citizens is apt: "I've been in my village since the early days of UNIFIL. I can not imagine the South without it. It's now part of the Land."<sup>18</sup> Another Lebanese resident of the South assured the listener that he would leave with UNIFIL if it were to go.<sup>19</sup>

In the personal interview the author had with the current UNIFIL Force Commander, Major General Konrote, on December 31, 1997, at the UN logistics base in the city of Tyr in South Lebanon, General Konrote stressed the importance of UNIFIL's humanitarian role and the remarkable relationship between his men and the local citizens: "That has always been an important and crucial factor to UNIFIL's ability to operate successfully and to survive in the complex situation persisting in the South. I've been serving in UNIFIL since the early mandate, as a Company Commander and as FIJIBATTCOM [commander of the Fiji battalion], I can say: a successful mission requires a successful relationship with the locals at different levels, either civilians or militaries." At the end of this interview, General Konrote gave the author a copy of the 1997 Annual Report of UNIFIL Humanitarian Assistance to document the points he had been making.

## **ECONOMIC INTERACTION BETWEEN UNIFIL AND LEBANON**

The traditional economic system of South Lebanon was based on agriculture, but farming is now disappearing there as a means of gaining a livelihood. This a general phenomenon throughout the Mediterranean area, but in South Lebanon it has been due largely to the effects of more than 20 years of social disruption and violence caused by the Israeli permanent occupation of the South.<sup>20</sup>

Yet despite the erosion of the South's traditional economic base, the area that historically has been one of the poorest in Lebanon, is now experiencing unprecedented prosperity. A construction boom == largely in the form of large private houses -- together with a considerable expansion of local commerce, is under way. The most important sources of this new prosperity all depend on UNIFIL.

First and very importantly, the protection and stability UNIFIL affords means that the area has become an investment target for Lebanese expatriates as well as Beirut businessmen. Money is usually invested in property, new houses and commercial establishments of various sorts.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, UNIFIL injects around \$50 to \$70 million annually<sup>21</sup> (exact figures for this year were unavailable) directly into the regional economy which is a relatively small area. Direct expenditures by UNIFIL and Force members can be grouped in ten general categories:

**1) Personal purchases** made by UNIFIL soldiers while serving in Lebanon as it has been mentioned in the paragraph above on social interaction. One must mention here the famous street in the town of Naqoura where UNIFIL Headquarters is located called Mingi Street. It has become for thousands of those who have served in UNIFIL more important than Broadway because of its incredible and incomparable variety of items and prices.

**2) The daily services procurement of UNIFIL's units** from local markets of fresh produce and other foodstuffs and the purchase of other items such as utilities.

**3) UNIFIL's position as an attractive source of employment,** especially for local youth for whom agricultural work holds little appeal. Jobs with UNIFIL, such as translators, secretaries, gardeners, cooks, and press officers, are subject to intense local competition because of their relatively high salaries compared with the jobs in the Lebanese economy.

**4) The funds of battalions for humanitarian and development assistance** provided by their own governments, particularly the Norwegian, Finnish and Irish Battalions, are another source of funds flowing into the local economies. This assistance has ranged from food, to schools, to construction of public facilities and orphanages, building up the infrastructure of villages, and providing equipment for the winter.

**5) Rental payments for land** and buildings occupied by UNIFIL soldiers as headquarters and as Force positions since 1978



including hundreds of houses and yards are an important factor in the local real estate markets. The rates are periodically revised to take into consideration the inflation in the whole country.

**6) Fuel and maintenance for the Force's** vehicles are also procured locally with a certain level of work being done in local workshops.

**7) Medical treatment** for local citizens, with no exceptions or discrimination. Care is provided to about 3,000 people a month (for example, health and dental care and medical surgeries.)

**8) Tourism** is done by hundreds of UNIFIL soldiers weekly, and the transportation, accommodations, visits to historical sites, and souvenir shopping from this activity is of direct benefit to local economies.

**9) Lebanese contractors** doing construction work for UNIFIL build buildings, roads, military positions, yards, and other facilities.

**10) Transportation of UNIFIL troops in and out of Lebanon** provides a financial boost to Beirut international airport and to other parts of the Lebanese travel industry.

#### **UNIFIL'S FUTURE: SUCCESSFUL WITHDRAWAL WITH MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.**

**Conditions for Success.** An explicit and absolute condition for the successful withdrawal of UNIFIL from Lebanon is the prior complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon. Once this

condition is met, the rest of UNIFIL's mission can be expeditiously accomplished:

- international peace and security in the area would be restored;
- The Government of Lebanon would be assisted in ensuring the return of its effective authority to the area;
- And finally the cessation of hostilities would be well determined.

But this kind of withdrawal will require for success and safety complete and delicate coordination between all parties from the highest to the lowest level, all under the umbrella of the UN.

**Scenario for Success.** The scenario for withdrawal should be a well-prepared "Rolling Process" which is a military method endorsed by the United Nations peacekeeping forces for successful withdrawal of occupying forces while avoiding any tactical confrontations. In South Lebanon it will entail UNIFIL units taking over areas left by the Israelis and then delivering them to national Lebanese Army units.

Here it should be noted that in mid-1995, when substantial progress had been made in the Israeli-Lebanese/Syrian peace process and a draft agreement had been approved -- but before Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by an Israeli and before Benjamin Netanyahu was elected as Prime Minister of Israel -- the then UNIFIL Force Commander, Norwegian

General Trond Furuhoide discussed in detail with the Lebanese Army Commander the imminent "rolling process" of the withdrawal of Israeli forces that UNIFIL was about to start and how the Lebanese Army could help in that.<sup>22</sup>

At the end of the rolling process and the completion of the Israeli withdrawal back across its international border with Lebanon, a well-defined buffer zone controlled by UNIFIL (or any other agreed forces) could be established along the border. It could, for instance, be similar to the one which was deployed in the Sinai in Egypt between the Israeli and Egyptian forces. This kind of buffer zone might be essential for the period immediately after the Israeli withdrawal.

An alternative method could be for the Lebanese national authorities to commit themselves, as they have done in many occasions, to reaffirm the statement of the President of Lebanon in 1995 before the UN General Assembly that Lebanon's National Army will assure the order and security in South Lebanon after the withdrawal of Israeli forces and that the Lebanese Army is capable of doing so. The role of UNIFIL would be discussed at the appropriate time.

At a press conference in Jerusalem on March 24, 1998, during his tour of the Middle East, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed his views on the ability of Lebanon to insure the security in South Lebanon when the Israelis leave: "Lebanon is able to have control in the South in the event of Israeli

withdrawal. The Lebanese Government is effective and the Army is professional. . . . The [Lebanese] Government is effective, and the [Lebanese] Army is capable."<sup>23</sup>

But the best scenario should envision a joint Israeli-Lebanese/Syrian peace operation, sponsored by the United States (and possibly the UN), where the Lebanese Army rather than UN or Israel would establish control over the South and patrol along the borders of Lebanon. Under this scenario the Israeli-backed militia (SLA) would be disbanded under special arrangements with the Lebanese government similar to those previously done with the other militias at the end of the civil war in 1990. This arrangement is most favored by Israel, which would welcome the deployment of the Lebanese Army along the borders provided that the Lebanese Army is capable of asserting control over the region.<sup>24</sup>

In his interview with the author mentioned above, UNIFIL Force Commander General Konrote expressed his personal view, drawing on his long experience with UNIFIL, that a scenario similar to the one outlined above with the Israeli forces withdrawing entirely and the Lebanese Army assuming control of the area was the only successful way for UNIFIL to withdraw with its mission accomplished. He thought that the "rolling process" or something similar was the best way to bring peace to the area and that only with the withdrawal of Israeli forces could UNIFIL successfully conclude its mission.<sup>25</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

It must be stressed here that the issue of whether UNIFIL should be withdrawn with its mission successfully accomplished is quite distinct from the issue as to whether UNIFIL, for 20 years in South Lebanon, has succeeded in its mission or not.

From just the brief consideration of the economic and social dimensions summarized above, certain conclusions seem to emerge.

UNIFIL has been one of the UN's most controversial and problematic peace operations to date.

**Successes.** Although it has failed to fulfill its original mandate, it has succeeded in:

- Fulfilling its initial task of verifying a partial withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon after the 1978 and 1982 invasions.
- Providing, to a limited degree, a buffer zone between the belligerents, reducing the number and intensity of clashes. It also succeeded in reducing the infiltration by armed elements into its area of operation.
- Protecting the local population.
- Strengthening the local economy within its area of operation.

But its greatest success has been in:

- Providing humanitarian assistance to the local population.

**Failures.** UNIFIL's inability to deter the 1982 Israeli invasion is considered by many as evidence that the Force is ineffectual. Others, however, acknowledge that the mission's difficulties stem from the immense problems facing Lebanon that virtually no peacekeeping force could contain. The reasons given for UNIFIL's failures include the following.

First, UNIFIL was never mandated to possess a military capability to maintain peace in the region. Furthermore, it was not expected to change the military balance in the South. So its mandate was impracticable from the start (see Rules of Engagement on page 8 above).

Second, UNIFIL's deployment and operations were in a extremely hostile environment and very complex area of operation that was split into three parts. Moreover, the consent of local parties to UNIFIL's mission, particularly the agreement of Israel, was never assured.

Third, the Lebanese Government that UNIFIL was given the mission to support had, for a great period of time, lost its authority in South Lebanon as well as in Beirut to such a degree that its restoration was for many years unthinkable.

Above all, it should be always borne in mind that UNIFIL was always caught in the firefights; its soldiers were kidnapped, ambushed, disarmed and occasionally murdered. UNIFIL has in fact incurred a high number of casualties, with some 218 troops killed in different circumstances from 1978 to 1997.<sup>26</sup>

Since its initial mandate, UNIFIL has been operating in a specific, complex social and economic environment. In turn it has had important cultural, economic and political implications for the wider society of which it has become part.

The successful completion of the mandate of UNIFIL and the restoration of full Lebanese sovereignty must await the withdrawal of Israeli forces from South Lebanon. Whether this will come only as part of a larger peace agreement or can be accomplished as a separate action remains to be seen. In any event, decisions in the region will be taken by the main contending powers and not by the UN or UNIFIL. In the meantime, UNIFIL can continue its important activities and can be prepared to play an vital role in a disengagement or withdrawal scenario.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Tabitha Petran, The Struggle Over Lebanon (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Department of Public Information, "Middle East - UNTSO" (New York, January 15, 1998), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Mona Ghali, "United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon," The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping, ed. William J. Durch (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993). p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Department of Public Information, "Lebanon - UNIFIL" (New York, January 15, 1998), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Lieutenant General Emanuel Erskine, Mission with UNIFIL (London: Hurst & Co., 1989), p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Library of Congress (Federal Research Division), Lebanon: A Country Study (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989) p. 204.

<sup>7</sup> Ralph A. Hallenbeck, Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy: Intervention in Lebanon, August 1982-February 1984 (New York: Praeger, 1991), pp. 16-18.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 108.

<sup>11</sup> Information provided to author by UNIFIL Headquarters, Naqoura, Lebanon, April 1997.

<sup>12</sup> Information provided to author by UNIFIL Headquarters, Naqoura, Lebanon, April 1997.

<sup>13</sup> Jamal El-Hajj, UNIFIL: Social And Economic Influence In South Lebanon (Beirut: Lebanese University, 1997), p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with UNIFIL Force Commander Lieutenant General Jioji Konrote, Tyr, Lebanon, December 1997.



<sup>15</sup> Boutros-Boutros Ghali, UN Secretary General's Report to the Security Council on Israel's Bombing of the United Nations Compound at Qana, Lebanon (New York: United Nations, May 7, 1996), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Information provided to author by UNIFIL Headquarters, Naqoura, Lebanon, January 1997.

<sup>17</sup> Information provided to author by UNIFIL Headquarters, Naqoura, Lebanon, January 1997.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with a Lebanese resident of Rshaf Village in South Lebanon, June 1997.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with another Lebanese resident of Rshaf Village in South Lebanon, June 1997.

<sup>20</sup> Marianne Heiberg, Observation on UN Peacekeeping in Lebanon: A Preliminary Report (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 1984), p. 153.

<sup>21</sup> Information provided by the UNIFIL Deputy Chief of Staff for Liaison, UNIFIL Headquarters, Naqoura, Lebanon, March 1996.

<sup>22</sup> Briefing by UNIFIL Commander General Furuhoide at the Lebanese Army Headquarters in Beirut, 1995 (the author was present as the Lebanese Army Liaison Officer).

<sup>23</sup> Al Hayat, (New York ed.) March 25, 1998, Issue 12805, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Charles Winslow, Lebanon: War & Politics in a Fragmented Society (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 293.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with UNIFIL Force Commander Lieutenant General Jioji Konrote, Tyr, Lebanon, December 1997.

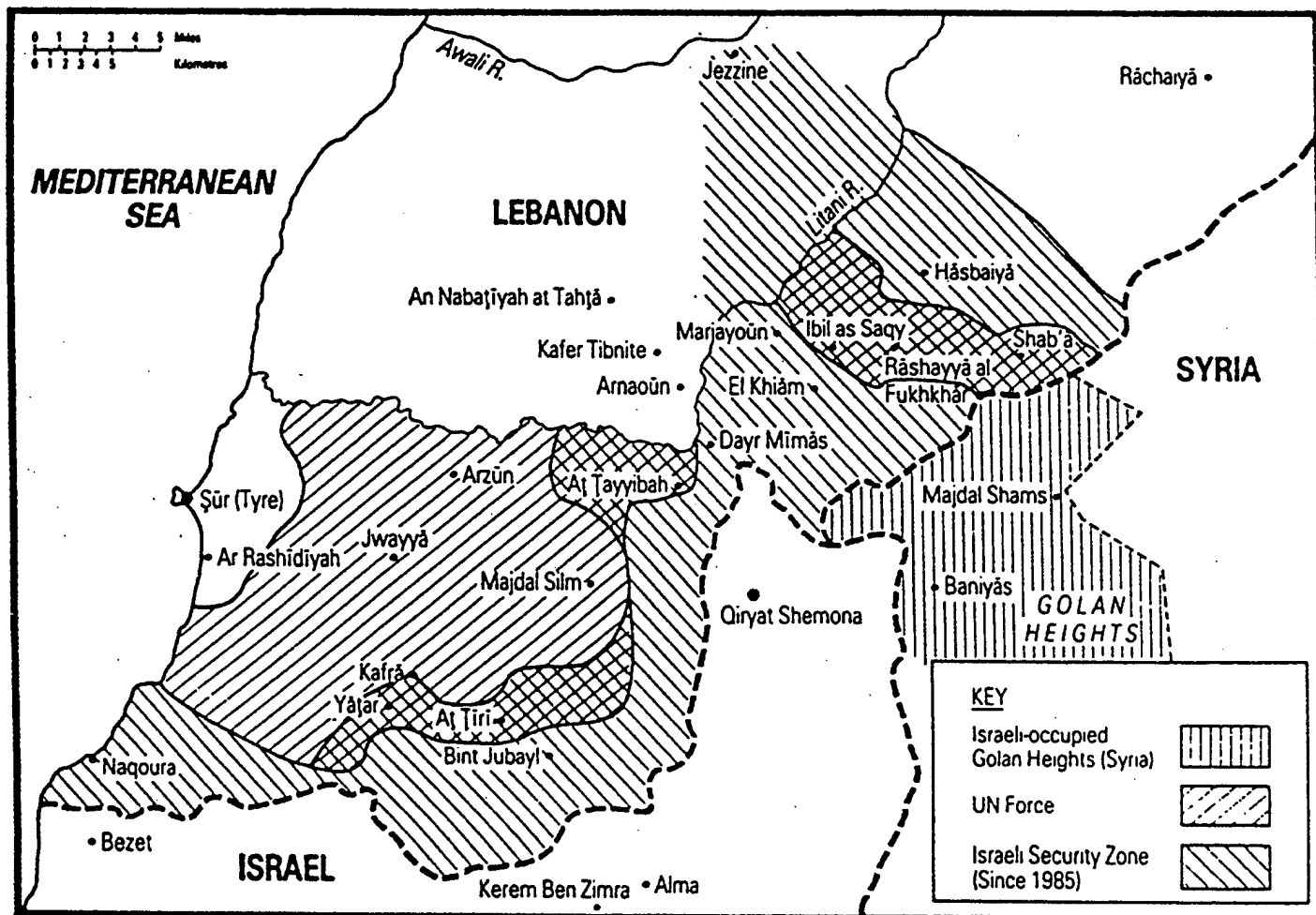
<sup>26</sup> Jamal El-Hajj, UNIFIL: Social And Economic Influence In South Lebanon (Beirut: Lebanese University, 1997), p. 40.

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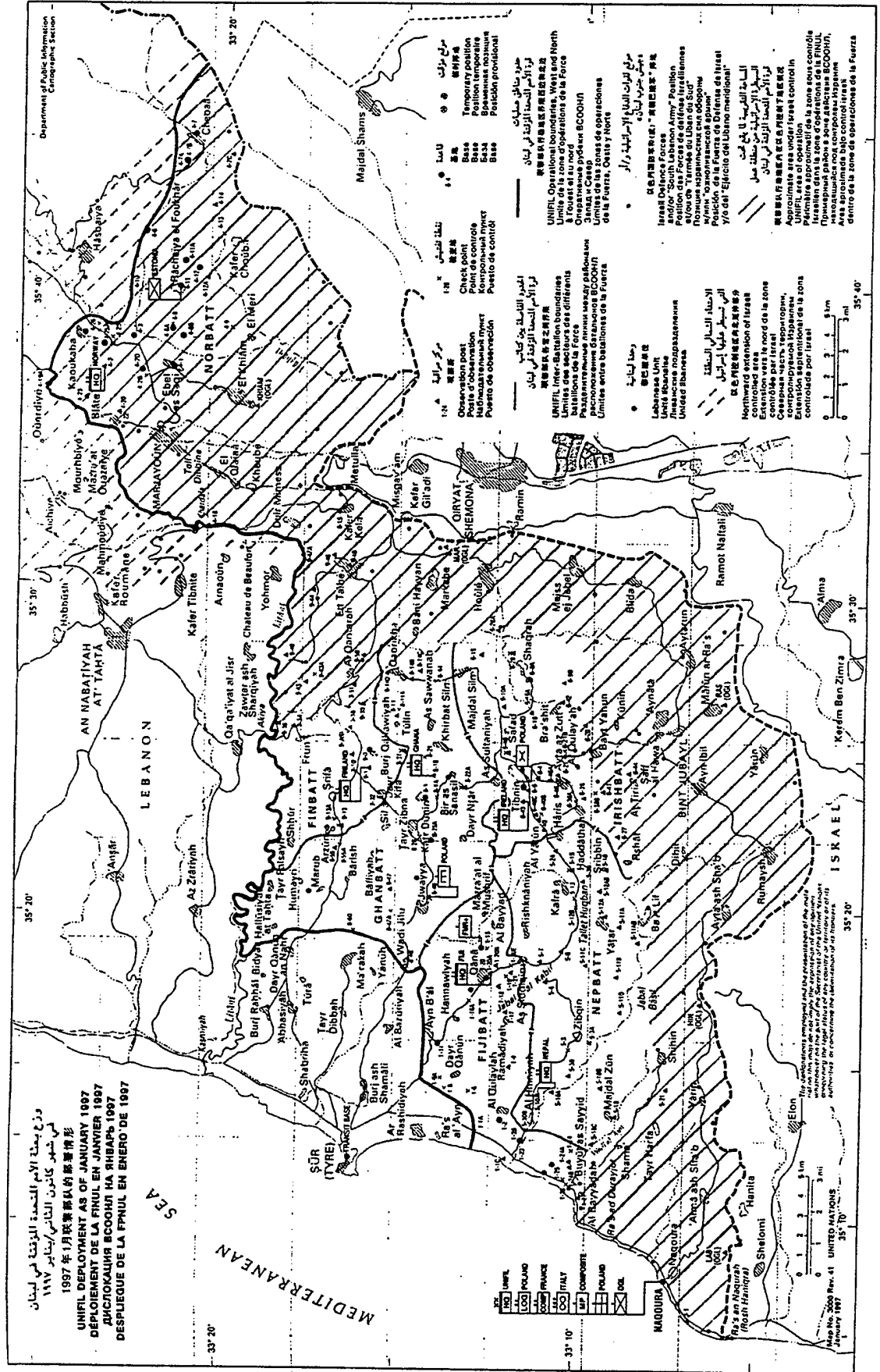
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## Southern Lebanon



# UNIFIL Area of Operations in 1997



1997 年 1 月 联合国部队在黎巴嫩  
 UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT AS OF JANUARY 1997  
 DEPLOIEMENT DE LA FINUL EN JANVIER 1997  
 ДСПЛОКАЦИЯ ВСОООН НА ЛИБАНОС В ЯНУАРИ 1997  
 DESPLIEGUE DE LA FPNUL EN ENERO DE 1997

1. UNIFIL West and North  
 2. UNIFIL South  
 3. UNIFIL North  
 4. UNIFIL West and North  
 5. UNIFIL South  
 6. UNIFIL North  
 7. UNIFIL West and North  
 8. UNIFIL South  
 9. UNIFIL North  
 10. UNIFIL West and North  
 11. UNIFIL South  
 12. UNIFIL North  
 13. UNIFIL West and North  
 14. UNIFIL South  
 15. UNIFIL North

## Visit to UNIFIL



**Lieutenant General Jioji Konrote, UNIFIL Force Commander and Colonel Jamal El-Hajj, Lebanese Army and International Fellow at the U.S. Army War College at the UNIFIL Tyr Logistics Base in South Lebanon, December 1997**

## **UN Security Council Resolutions**

### **UN Security Council Resolution 425**

March 19, 1978

The Security Council,

Taking note of the letters from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon and from the Permanent Representative of Israel, having heard the statements of the Permanent Representatives of Lebanon and Israel, gravely concerned at the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East and its consequences to the maintenance of international peace, convinced that the present situation impedes the achievement of a just peace in the Middle East,

1. 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 actions 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 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 from Member States;
4. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Council within twenty-four hours on the implementation of the present resolution.

### **United Nations Security Council Resolution 426**

March 19, 1978

The Security Council,

1. Approves the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), contained in document S/12611 of 19 March 1978,
2. Decides that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon shall be established in accordance with the above-mentioned report for an initial period of six months, and that it shall continue in operation thereafter if required, provided the Security Council so decides.