



## United States Mission to the United Nations

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**Statement by David Traystman, U.S. Adviser to the 61<sup>st</sup> GA  
on item 144: Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon**

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Before the Fifth Committee  
December 13, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We would also like to thank Controller Warren Sach for his introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the period from 1 July 2006 to 31 March 2007, as well as the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Mr. Rajat Saha, for his introduction of the related report of the ACABQ.

Mr. Chairman,

As my delegation noted on November 17<sup>th</sup> during this Committee's consideration of the Secretary-General's request for commitment authority for the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), we recognize that the surge in peacekeeping operations has placed a strain on the Organization. The United States understands the challenges faced by those at Headquarters and in the field and will support them with what we believe is necessary to achieve their mandates. We are particularly aware of the burden placed on our colleagues in the Secretariat during this difficult period, including during our sometimes-challenging negotiations. But it is precisely because of these new and ongoing challenges that we expect stronger management, more efficient and effective implementation of mandates, and greater accountability for action. My delegation must emphasize that as we continue to address the surge in peacekeeping operations, we must closely scrutinize the proposals before us to ensure that we will have the human and financial resources we need to meet our current and future challenges. We would like to ask the Secretariat to take extra care to ensure that requests for resources are fully justified, particularly in light of the challenges we will be facing.

As was the case with UNMIT, my delegation must again express regret that the request before us is not supported by the level of detail we would have received in a full budget submission. This committee will only be in a position to consider the Mission's full 06/07 budget in March of next year during the first part of its resumed 61st session. We will then consider the Mission's July 07/June 08 proposed budget in May, only two months later. My delegation agrees with the Advisory Committee's view that the routine use of the commitment authority with assessment mechanism represents a departure from good budget practice and discipline. My delegation calls on the Secretariat to apply the budget discipline required for the timely submission of proper budgets for the financing

of all peacekeeping operations.

With the above comments in mind, my delegation must note that we see indications in this request for commitment authority that those involved in its preparation have not approached the task at hand with the required level of scrutiny. We continue to see a tendency on the part of those preparing requests for financing to ask for more than is required and to place the burden on the members of this Committee to sort out what is truly needed to implement the Mission's mandate. For example, in the request before us, the Secretary-General has included funding for quick-impact projects (QIPs). As we all know, the question of QIPs has proven to be a somewhat controversial one in this Committee. My delegation believes that, acting in a cooperative spirit, the members of this Committee have agreed on a workable definition of QIPs: they are small scale projects designed to be rapidly implemented to aid the local population. They are meant to convey a sense of commitment to the local population and to create and sustain confidence in and support for new Missions. Such projects are to be authorized and implemented during the first two years of a Mission's existence.

UNIFIL has been in existence since 1978. Notwithstanding the increase in the Force's area of operations, we see no justification for including funding for QIPs in this request for commitment authority. If such a request is at all justified, it should be reviewed during our consideration of the full budget submission when this Committee will be able to judge whether such projects are justified in light of the purpose of QIPs and in the context of an examination of the programs and projects carried out by the UN agencies, funds, and programs in Lebanon, as well as the other members of the UN country team. The following agencies are UN country team partners in Lebanon: UNDP, FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNRWA, UNIDO, ILO, the World Bank, ESCWA, UNIFEM, and the IMF. Decisions on QIPs and, in fact, on all Mission activities that could possibly overlap with programs undertaken by other members of the country team and by bilateral and multilateral partners, should be taken in the context of an analysis of country team capabilities to ensure that any duplication of activities is kept to a minimum.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation sees the same lack of clarity and precision in the Secretariat's request for general temporary assistance (GTA) positions to reinforce the planning and backstopping capacity of the Mission at UN Headquarters. In light of the fact that UNIFIL is close to full deployment, my delegation is not convinced of the necessity of requesting funding of all of the proposed 51 GTA positions at UN Headquarters to address the Mission's short-term surge requirements. My delegation agrees with the Advisory Committee's recommendation that commitment authority equivalent to half of the amount corresponding to the requested 51 GTA positions should be approved. The continuing need for backstopping positions at UN Headquarters should be fully justified in the proposed 07/08 support account budget. While the United States is certainly sympathetic to the needs of the Mission and the Secretariat in administering UNIFIL, as we have evidenced by our support for this and, in fact, all missions, we must be confident,

particularly during this period of surge in peacekeeping operations, that we are utilizing our resources wisely. As my delegation stated during this Committee's consideration of UNMIT's request for commitment authority, we recognize that starting up or expanding missions between budget cycles may place a strain on what is normally provided through the support account. We encourage the development of an institutionalized process for dealing with these needs on an interim and a longer-term basis.

My delegation would also like to comment on the fact that the proposal we have before us includes \$1.8 million for petrol, oil and lubricants to support the deployment of Lebanese armed forces (LAF) personnel in southern Lebanon. While my delegation believes it is appropriate for UNIFIL to assist the Lebanese armed forces, we do not agree that we are in a position to authorize the inclusion of funding for fuel support for the LAF. My delegation also notes that additional fuel and rations support has been requested. As the Advisory Committee has indicated, the *nature* and extent of any support to be provided to the LAF should be clarified before the Mission's budget is prepared. My delegation believes that material support to any country's military armed forces should be obtained bilaterally or through other sources outside of a peacekeeping operation's budget. We are prepared to facilitate, if necessary, LAF requests to regional capitals for this and other material support. My delegation believes that the best way to move forward would be for this Committee to remove the requested funding from the proposal before us to allow for further review and analysis.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, my delegation would like to extend its appreciation to UNIFIL and Headquarters personnel for their hard work during this very challenging time.

Thank you.