



Office of the Special Coordinator
for Lebanon

Bureau du Coordinateur Spécial
pour le Liban

**United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Michael Williams
Statement Following Meeting with Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri
Beirut, Lebanon**

Friday, 02 July 2010

Good Afternoon,

It was a great privilege to meet again today with the Speaker of Parliament, H.E. Nabih Berri.

Much of our conversation was focused on Security Council Resolution 1701. I informed the Speaker that the thirteenth report on the resolution was released to the Security Council in New York last night. I will be travelling next week to New York to brief the Council on the report.

I also expressed to the Speaker my concern over incidents that occurred in south Lebanon earlier in the week. UNIFIL's freedom of movement was violated and UN troop-contributing countries are quite concerned. We must insist that the freedom of movement of UNIFIL is fully respected. UNIFIL's exercise in the area was carried out as part of its normal operations and with full respect of its mandate, and indeed the LAF assisted UNIFIL in defusing tensions.

The Speaker and I agreed that we should work hard to prevent any recurrence of the problems of the past week and that all parties must be involved in trying to defuse these tensions. I believe that the arrangements put in place under 1701 remain a guarantee against the recurrence of conflict. In this regard, UNIFIL is a critical element. Its presence and deployment in the south and its close work and coordination with the LAF provide the backbone for the implementation of resolution 1701 in a way that serves the interests of Lebanon and the stability of the entire region.

Speaker Berri assured me that Lebanon is determined to maintain the best relations and cooperation with UNIFIL, at the official and popular level. I warmly welcomed this assurance, and I am certain that the relationship between UNIFIL and the people of south Lebanon will remain one of trust and harmony.

Speaker Berri also raised with me finally today the issue of the delineation of Lebanon's maritime borders. I assured him that I will raise this in New York with relevant UN officials, including with the United Nations Legal Department.

Thank you

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