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Official Comments of the Government of Lebanon  
on the First Report of UNOGIL

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LETTER DATED 8 JULY 1958 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF LEBANON ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Upon instructions from the Government of Lebanon I have the honour to request you to circulate the enclosed "Official Comments of the Government of Lebanon on the First Report of the Observation Group in Lebanon" as a Security Council document to all Members of the United Nations.

Please accept, etc.

(Signed) Karim Azkoul

Permanent Representative of  
Lebanon to the United Nations

Official Comments of the Government of Lebanon on the  
First Report of the United Nations Observation Group  
in Lebanon (Document S/4040 of 3 July 1958)

The Government of Lebanon wishes to make the following formal comments on the First Report of the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon (Document S/4040 of 3 July 1958). These comments seek to establish three theses which are the headings of each one of the three parts below.

I

Thesis I: The positive conclusions drawn by the Observation Group in its First Report of 3 July 1958, are either inconclusive or misleading or unwarranted.

The fundamental substantive conclusions are to be found in Paragraph 21. They are three and read as follows:

1. "It has not been possible to establish from where these arms [namely, the arms seen by the Observation Group] were acquired..."
2. "Nor, was it possible to establish if any of the armed men observed had infiltrated from outside."
3. "There is little doubt, however, that the vast majority was in any case composed of Lebanese."

The first and second conclusions are obviously misleading. To say that "it has not been possible to establish from where these arms were acquired" does not at all tell us either that the Group actually inquired into their origin and did not succeed in establishing it, or that it is sure they were not smuggled from Syria. The phrase "it has not been possible" could mean only that the Group had no time to carry out this establishing investigation, or that it met with insurmountable difficulties, or any number of other logical possibilities; from none of which nothing positive as to the origin of these arms can be drawn. Thus, the Government of Lebanon wishes to ask: where did these arms come from, and why did the Observation Group go out of its way to state that it could not establish their origin when we know it made no attempt to do so? Furthermore, the arms the Group saw are, from the very Report itself, a very small part of

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the ammunition at the disposal of the rebels. Consequently, nothing can be concluded from this as to the origin of all the arms used by the rebels.

Concerning the second conclusion above, three remarks are to be made. Firstly, did the Observation Group really investigate everyone of the armed men they "observed" as to whether they did or did not really infiltrate from outside? Why then this sweeping statement? It would thus seem that this negative statement of the Observation Group has no substantive, conclusive character. Secondly, from the very Report itself, the Observation Group was able to "observe" a very small number of the men fighting against the Government in Lebanon. Thus, even supposing that this "observation" was most meticulous, which clearly it was not, nothing follows from this Report as to the origin of all the men fighting against the Government in Lebanon. Thirdly, when the very charge of the Government of Lebanon is that there are infiltrators in Lebanon fighting with the rebels against the Government, and when the Observation Group was dispatched by the Security Council precisely "to ensure that there is no illegal infiltration of personnel or supply of arms or other material across the Lebanese borders", is it not certain that the rebel leaders when they take the Observation Group into their territory will precisely see to it that the Observation Group "observe" no infiltrators? Thus, how does the Observation Group know that between its establishment by the Council and the moment it started "observing" - and this was a matter of about ten days - the rebel leaders did not deinfiltate the infiltrators back into Syria or move them away from the areas to which the Observation Group was admitted? It would take about one day, not more, to send back to Syria several thousand infiltrators who had been fighting in Lebanon.

Concerning the third conclusion above, it is clear that this is both misleading and unwarranted. It is misleading because while it refers only to the armed men "seen" by the Observation Group - and these are a very small fraction of the total number of men fighting in the rebellion - careless readers and commentators have taken it to refer to all the armed men fighting against the Government. Thus a false impression has been created by the world press, both the tendentious and even some of the honest press, that one of the findings of the Observation Group has been that "the vast majority" of the men fighting the

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Government are Lebanese. This is of course not at all what this Report says. And it is unwarranted because the Observation Group does not tell us how it was able to establish that the "vast majority" of the armed men it "observed" "was in any case composed of Lebanese". Did they investigate each one of them? Is it not certain that the rebel leaders will have shown them only Lebanese fighters? How then can the Observation Group possibly justify this sweeping statement?

A more careful editing of the text of this Report would have unmistakably drawn attention to these most important distinctions.

It seems therefore that the positive conclusions drawn by the Observation Group in its Report are clearly either inconclusive or misleading or unwarranted.

## II

Thesis II: There are, on the other hand, warranted positive conclusions that can be drawn from this Report but that have not been drawn explicitly or sufficiently by the Observation Group; all these warranted positive conclusions completely support, or at least do not at all weaken, the thesis of the Government of Lebanon concerning the existence of illegal infiltration of men and smuggling of arms.

Warranted Positive Conclusion 1: The Observation Group has not yet been able to carry out its mandate.

The mandate of the Observation Group is "to ensure that there is no illegal infiltration of personnel or supply of arms or other material across the Lebanese borders". But, in the first place, the Report tells us that of the 278 kms. of the total Lebanese-Syrian land frontier only 18 kms. are under the control of the Government forces, the rest being under the control of the rebels. With respect to this rebel-controlled territory the Report explicitly says: "No formal assurances from any quarter were offered to the Group with regard to access to territory not under Government control, nor were such assurances sought by the Group" (Paragraph 5). And the Report further states (Paragraphs 23, 24 and 25) that the observer teams "have on occasion experienced difficulty in

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penetrating opposition-held territory", especially with respect to four areas where they "appear to have touched upon sensitive spots which are in areas claimed by Government sources to be supply and infiltration routes".

It is clear from all this that the mandate to "observe" and "ensure that there is no illegal infiltration of personnel and supply of arms or other material across the Lebanese borders" has not been fulfilled so far by the Observation Group. For it takes but a small part of the frontier being shut off from the Observation Group to "ensure" for the infiltrators free infiltration from Syria into Lebanon; how much more so when practically all the frontiers are, as the Report says, "opposition-held"?

Again, the difficult topography of the Syrian-Lebanese frontiers is complained of by the Observation Group as having impeded its task of observation, even along the Government-held short stretch of 18 kms. otherwise fully accessible to the Group (see especially Paragraphs 6, 7 and 8). But the inhabitants of these areas on both sides of the frontiers are quite used to the rugged character of the topography and therefore can easily infiltrate back and forth precisely at the points where the Observation Group would find it difficult to reach and "observe". Difficulty of terrain could prevent the Observation Group from "observing" and for that reason would be an ideal condition under which the infiltration could go on "unobserved".

The difficulty or inability of the Group as at present conceived and constituted to carry out the mandate of the Security Council is clearly recognized by the Report when it says: "It will be seen, therefore, that the areas of primary concern to the Observation Group are those where the problems of accessibility are the greatest, both from the standpoint of topography and of obtaining freedom and security of movement" (Paragraph 8).

Again, the Report recognizes that night observation has not yet started (Paragraphs 14a and 17d). But when the infiltrators know that the eyes watching them are not watching at night, even if those eyes were otherwise watching all the borders, then they will choose precisely the night to carry out their movements. It follows that the Observation Group has not been able so far to carry out its mandate.

Again, aerial reconnaissance, which the Report says "will be employed in an increasing measure" with a view to patrolling "the border areas", has not yet really begun so far as this Report is concerned (Paragraphs 14e and 17c). Thus, whatever information can be gathered by this device has not yet been gathered. But even if this aerial reconnaissance were fully operative, it would still have two limitations: it cannot spot out all infiltration during the day, and it can hardly spot out anything during the night. There is thus no substitute for actual physical land "observation" at the borders themselves.

Concerning the cities, the Report says: "In Beirut, Tripoli and Saida, sections of the city lie behind barricades, and are normally inaccessible to observation, except under previously negotiated arrangements" (Paragraph 10). Such inaccessibility is also true of the Chouf area which, the Report says, "is under the complete control of opposition elements". The Government of Lebanon holds that in these cities and areas the rebels have been assisted by hundreds of Syrians, Egyptians and Palestinian refugees. The observers now recognize that they were unable to penetrate the barricades or areas into these pockets of rebellion and search them out thoroughly for infiltrator participants in the rebellion; thus they have not been able to observe and report on a very important aspect of the situation, and therefore to that extent have not carried out the mandate of the Security Council.

The Report says that the preparations for the final stage of operation of the Observation Group are now "virtually completed"; and that therefore this "final stage - when the Group can operate at its planned strength - is about to commence" (Paragraph 13). The "virtual completion" of the preparations and the fact that the definitive stage of operation "is about to commence" are clear recognitions that the Group has not yet fulfilled the mandate of the Security Council.

It appears to the Government of Lebanon now that the construction placed upon the resolution of the Security Council of 11 June 1958 has been insufficient. The interpretation of the Secretary-General may have been a possible interpretation, but it is no more adequate to the present situation as revealed by the Report of the Observation Group. Thus the Government of Lebanon wishes to register its strong reservations concerning this matter.

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The Report says: "The methods employed by the Observation Group in carrying out the mandate from the Security Council must be directed toward the explicit purposes of observation and reporting for which the Observation Group was established" (Paragraph 11). The Secretary-General in his press releases stressed the matter of "observation" as "decisive". In all this the clear tendency is to underline in the resolution of 11 June 1958 the observing and reporting functions of the Group. The Government of Lebanon conceives "observing" and "reporting" as subordinate to the truly decisive part of the text of the resolution: "so as to ensure that there is no illegal infiltration of personnel or supply of arms or other material across the Lebanese borders". As Thesis III will presently prove, the "illegal infiltration of personnel or supply of arms or other material across the Lebanese borders" still continues (not to mention the other phases of the massive intervention in Lebanon's internal affairs of which the Government of Lebanon complained to the Security Council, such as the training of Lebanese rebels on Syrian soil, and the violent and utterly unprecedented press and radio campaigns by the United Arab Republic against the Government of Lebanon and inciting the people of Lebanon to overthrow their Government by force); and therefore to that extent the most important part of the Security Council resolution has not been implemented.

From all this, then, it appears to the Government of Lebanon that the most striking warranted positive conclusion of this Report, a conclusion lying at the surface of the Report, is that the Observation Group has not yet been able to carry out the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council, nor has the resolution of the Security Council been really implemented.

Warranted Positive Conclusion 2: The Report of the Observation Group admits, either directly or indirectly, the existence of illegal infiltration of men and smuggling of arms.

We criticized above the third substantive conclusion of the Report which says "a vast majority of the armed men seen by the Group<sup>7</sup> was in any case composed of Lebanese". We proved that this conclusion was unwarranted. But in so far as the Observation Group holds to this conclusion, then they must know that there is at least a minority that was not composed of Lebanese. Here then is

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a most clear admission by the Observation Group that there is infiltration in Lebanon, even among the small number of armed men seen by the observers. How much greater then would the number of infiltrators be among the vast bands of armed men not seen by the observers?

In Paragraph 11 of the Report there is a general sociological explanation of how, due to "bonds of identity within ethnic groups", elements of the population existing on either side of the frontier line between Lebanon and Syria move back and forth across this frontier line in support of each other. This is clearly an attempt to explain away infiltration where it occurs. The Government of Lebanon holds precisely that several thousand such infiltrators with "bonds of identity within ethnic groups" have been trained in Syria in subversive activities and brought back to the borders of Lebanon and infiltrated into our territory. Thus sociological explanations, even if correct, serve only to prove either the existence or the strong probability of infiltration.

A look on the map distributed with the Report will reveal that the areas of Lebanon bordering on Syria are for the most part held by rebel forces. This very fact is most significant. How do the rebels who exist there support themselves economically? Where do they get their arms? The very fact that these border areas are in the hands of the rebels proves, especially if we keep in mind that they are economically not self-supporting and that they cannot possibly manufacture arms themselves, that they are in thoroughgoing intercourse with the Syrian hinterland. The propinquity of these border areas to Syria is the only explanation why the rebels are able to hold, from all the parts of Lebanon, precisely these areas; for, due to this propinquity, they can receive support - in men, money and arms - directly all the time from Syria.

Again, in Paragraph 26 of the Report the Observation Group describes in great detail the obstructive tactics used by the rebels so as to prevent the Observation Group from reaching what the Report calls "sensitive spots which are in areas claimed by Government sources to be supply and infiltration routes". These obstructive tactics include firing, armed persuasive methods, mining of roads, destroying of bridges, and other methods. All these obstructive tactics occurred since the arrival of the Observation Group in Lebanon and were all intended to prevent the Group from penetrating these "sensitive spots". What

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more decisive evidence can be given that the rebels have something to hide from the Observation Group and therefore would resort to any method to prevent them from observing and reporting on the areas they control? They not only refuse them admission into these areas but they actually destroy bridges, mine roads, etc., so as to make their physical penetration of the areas impossible even if they would admit them. The Government of Lebanon holds that it is precisely in these areas that thousands of Syrian infiltrators roam about and take part in the rebellion, and that untold quantities of smuggled arms are hidden.

The very last Paragraph of the Report is most significant both as to its contents and its location in the Report. This is Paragraph III, 4 in Annex B. In this Paragraph, which is put at the very tail not of the body of the Report but of the last Annex to the Report, so that probably hardly anybody noticed it, the Group says that on 25 June "United Nations Military Observers observed approximately one company uniformed Syrian soldiers on both sides of the road leading from Deir El Achayer into Syria, in an area where the location of the border is under dispute and is not known to the local inhabitants. The opposition leader, however, proffered the information that the area concerned was generally considered Syrian. In the area of Deir El Achayer, United Nations Military Observers also observed approximately 1,000 armed opposition forces."

It is clear, then, that "one company of uniformed Syrian soldiers" was observed by the Observation Group on both sides of the road leading from Deir El Achayer, which is the headquarters of the rebellion in that area, into Syria. It is said that the border is under dispute and the opinion of the opposition leader that the area is generally considered Syrian is recorded by the Observation Group. Why did the Group then not ask the Government about this matter? Why did they record only the opinion of the "opposition leader"? The Government of Lebanon holds that this area is Lebanese and this "company of uniformed Syrian soldiers" had no right to be on Lebanese soil, and therefore the presence of this company in that area is a flagrant infiltration, if not worse, by the armed forces of Syria into the territory of Lebanon. But even assuming that this area is really disputed, the mere presence of "one company of uniformed Syrian soldiers" in that same area in which a rebellion is taking place against the Government of Lebanon cannot have any other explanation,

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especially if we keep in mind the official attitude (reflected in the radio and press of Cairo and Damascus) of the Government of the United Arab Republic towards the Government of Lebanon, than that it is there in order somehow to assist the rebellion. The Government of Lebanon holds that the "1,000 armed opposition forces", concerning which the Report does not tell us whether they were Lebanese, are partly at least composed of Syrian volunteers who had infiltrated into Lebanon. This is a most significant finding of the Observation Group which has been given little publicity and which, if thoroughly investigated by the Observation Group, would have completely vindicated the claims of the Government of Lebanon.

In Paragraph 22 of the Report, it is stated that "there has been considerable mortar firing in the Marjayoun area. From observations the firing came from the vicinity of Halta, 2.4 kms. inside the Lebanese border near the border of Syria and was directed at El-Khiam and Marjayoun", two towns in Lebanon. The Report further says that the mortars used are 120 mm., that is, a type which is exclusively used by regular armies. The Report gives also some details on the number of mortar rounds fired, dates of firing etc.

What is interesting, however, in this Paragraph is that the Observation Group does not draw any conclusions from or make any comments on that important incident except that the mortars are of a French type also used by the Lebanese army. We do not take it that the Observation Group is hinting at the possibility of the Lebanese army firing these mortars. Therefore, it should be logically inferred that this firing could come only from the Syrian army which - the observers should know it - uses also the same type, or at least from rebels who had received these mortars from the Syrian army. Furthermore, the Report does not say that the observation established that the source of the firing was within Lebanese territory. What it says is only that Halta, from the vicinity of which the firing came, lies 2.4 kms. inside Lebanon. Therefore the Report leaves us with the strong presumption that the vicinity of Halta (the term could cover several kilometres within or outside Lebanon) from which the firing came lies in Syrian territory. The Government of Lebanon holds that a thorough investigation of this case alone would have fully substantiated our charges.

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The listing of arms observed by the Group, in Annex B of the Report, together with the usage of the term "armed men" throughout the Report and the reference to "substantial movements of armed men within the country and concentrations at various places", demonstrate, by the quantity of arms in possession of the rebels and the types of these arms, which range from rifles to machine guns to grenades to heavy mortars, that the source of these arms lies outside Lebanon and, in the case of heavy arms at least, can only be Governments. There is no doubt in the mind of the Government of Lebanon that this source is the Government of the United Arab Republic.

It appears that we have demonstrated that the Report, while avoiding direct judgement on the factual existence of illegal infiltration of armed men and smuggling of arms, has by the information it has produced fully substantiated our charge that this infiltration and smuggling of arms is a reality.

Thesis III: The independent position of the Government of Lebanon remains today exactly what it was when the Government of Lebanon first presented and defended its case before the Security Council, namely,

- (1) that there has been and there still is massive, illegal and unprovoked intervention in the affairs of Lebanon by the United Arab Republic;
- (2) that this intervention aims at undermining and does in fact threaten the independence of Lebanon; and
- (3) that the situation created by this intervention is likely, if it continues, to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

The six sets of facts used in proof of the actuality of this massive intervention are as true today as they were on 6 June 1958 when they were first set forth before the Security Council. These six sets of facts are: "(a) The supply of arms on a large scale from the United Arab Republic to subversive elements in Lebanon. (b) The training in subversion on the territory of the United Arab Republic of elements from Lebanon and the sending back of these elements to Lebanon to subvert their Government. (c) The participation of United Arab Republic civilian nationals, residing in or passing into Lebanon,

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in subversive and terrorist activities in Lebanon. (d) The participation of United Arab Republic governmental elements in subversive and terrorist activities and in the direction of rebellion in Lebanon. (e) The violent and utterly unprecedented press campaign conducted by the United Arab Republic against the Government of Lebanon. (f) The violent and utterly unprecedented radio campaign conducted by the United Arab Republic inciting the people of Lebanon to overthrow their Government."

The illegal infiltration of men has not ceased. The Government of Lebanon estimates that there are several thousand infiltrators taking part in the rebellion in Lebanon.

The illegal smuggling of arms has not ceased. The Government of Lebanon estimates that there are more than 50,000 pieces of arms of various descriptions in the hands of the rebels and infiltrators, including heavy types of arms that can only be supplied by Governments. Where do these arms come from? In two engagements lately, in Tripoli and the Chouf, the forces fighting the Government used more fire power than the Government forces. Where does this apparently inexhaustible supply of arms and ammunition come from?

There are training and assembly camps in Homs and Damascus and elsewhere in Syria, for volunteers from Syria and Lebanon, and for anyone who wishes to fight against the Government of Lebanon. There are public campaigns in the streets of Damascus and elsewhere in Syria and Egypt for subscriptions to aid the rebellion against the Government of Lebanon.

The press and radio of the United Arab Republic are today as virulent against the Government and policies of Lebanon and as inciting to rebellion in Lebanon as ever before.

The press and radio and official pronouncements of all Communist countries throughout the world support the rebellion in Lebanon and attack the Government of Lebanon.

All this is open to all people, including the Observation Group, to observe and ascertain for themselves.

The Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and France, which have their own independent sources of information, appear to corroborate the view of the Government of Lebanon concerning the intervention by the United Arab Republic in the internal affairs of Lebanon.

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Many Governments in the Middle East have exhibited real solidarity with the Government of Lebanon. They too know first-hand about conditions in Lebanon and the area in general. The Governments of Turkey and the Arab Union in particular have expressed the view to the Government of Lebanon that if the subversion in Lebanon succeeds, a subversion fully fomented, supported and directed from outside, then similar subversive attempts are sure to follow in other countries in the Middle East, to the detriment of freedom and stability in the area and to the benefit only of the subversive forces throughout the world.

The conclusion which the Government of Lebanon wishes to place on record is that the three claims which it made on 6 June 1958 before the Security Council concerning the massive intervention in the internal affairs of Lebanon by the United Arab Republic are in no way impaired or invalidated by the Report of the Observation Group; that in so far as any positive warranted conclusions can be drawn from the Report these claims have, on the contrary, been substantiated; and that therefore the responsibility of the Security Council with respect to the complaint against the intervention of the United Arab Republic in the internal affairs of Lebanon remains undiminished and intact.

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