

Middle East conflict - Lebanon. Security Council documents: Middle East con...

HS L 179:100



Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

Middle East conflict 1958 - Nov. 17

Secco documents

- 1) Letter from Sec. Gen. - to President of SECCO
- 2) Fifth Report of UNOGIL - to Secco
(signed: Plaza, Dayal, Bull)

L 179: 100

UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY
COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

S/4115
17 November 1958

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Letter dated 17 November 1958 from the Secretary-General,
addressed to the President of the Security Council

In its letter to you dated 16 November 1958 (S/4113), the Government of Lebanon has asked for the deletion from the list of items, with which the Security Council is seized, of the Lebanese complaint presented to the Council on 21 May 1958. In its Fifth Report dated 14 November 1958 (S/4114), the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon, by way of a conclusion, has stated that since the task assigned to the Group "may now be regarded as completed, the Group is of the opinion that the withdrawal of the UNOGIL should now be undertaken". The Group accordingly submits a recommendation to that effect. Both documents are today circulated to the Security Council.

In view of the statement of the Government of Lebanon and the recommendation of the Observation Group, I have immediately instructed the Group to present, in consultation with the Government of Lebanon, a detailed plan for the withdrawal. I have taken this step under the authorization given to the Secretary-General in the Security Council resolution of 11 June 1958 to take the necessary steps for implementation of the Security Council's decision. The instruction given to the Observation Group implies that I consider the task of the Group as completed and that my remaining duty under the resolution thus covers only the necessary measures for the liquidation of the operation.

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FIFTH REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVATION GROUP IN LEBANON

Submitted through the Secretary-General in pursuance of the
resolution of the Security Council of 11 June 1958 (S/4023)

Sir,

The United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon has the honour
..... to transmit to you its Fifth Report to the Security Council.

(Signed) Galo Plaza
Chairman

(Signed) Rajeshwar Dayal
Member

(Signed) Odd Bull
Major-General
Executive Member

FIFTH REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVATION GROUP IN LEBANON
TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

1. The present report of the Group covers its activities from 21 September to 14 November 1958. This period has been marked by a substantial expansion in personnel and equipment. Previously established posts have been fully manned and equipped and a considerable number of additional posts have been set up both close to the frontier and in depth. Despite occasional interference with and, more rarely, firing at United Nations patrols, the general pattern has been one of complete coverage of all frontier and other significant areas.
2. An important event of the period was the assumption of office on 23 September by General Fouad Chehab as the new President of Lebanon. In the period immediately following there occurred a number of disturbances, accompanied by a state of tension, in Beirut itself and in areas surrounding it, as well as to its north and east. As a result, there was some reorientation of the activities of Observers, who were detailed to patrol more extensively in these areas but made no observations of significance in regard to the Group's mandate.
3. On 15 October 1958, the new disturbances came to an end with the formation of a new Government, subsequently unanimously confirmed in office by the National Assembly, which received the support of practically all sections of Lebanese opinion. Already following the change of President on 23 September, the Lebanese Armed Forces had begun to penetrate into the previously Opposition-held areas of the Akkar Plain, the North Bekaa Valley, and the villages on the slopes of Mt. Hermon. With the formation of the new Government on 15 October, the assertion of Government authority in these and other areas proceeded more rapidly.
4. The period covered by this report has seen the withdrawal of the United States troops which had first landed in Lebanon on 15 July. A part of these forces had been withdrawn in the middle of August and the evacuation of the remainder was begun in the latter half of September and was completed without incident on 25 October.

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5. By that time, the only major areas in Lebanon not under the control of the Government forces were the Chouf area southeast of Beirut held by well-disciplined Druze partisans and the Deir-el-Aachayer salient on the Syrian border held by the small so-called National Liberation Army. During the last days of October, the leaders in these areas disbanded their forces. Thus, organized opposition forces have now to all intents and purposes ceased to exist and the Government is in process of extending its authority over the whole country.

6. While isolated cases of shooting have continued to occur, these have now exclusively the character of inter-village feuds, private vendettas or outright banditry. With the general improvement in the law and order situation throughout the country, such incidents as now occur are taking place mainly in remote areas and are sporadic in nature. United Nations Observers from time to time encounter a few armed men in these areas and more rarely are held up or shot at by them. This represents a vestige of lawlessness in areas not fully under Government control, rather than any concerted action against its authority.

DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

7. Since the last report the number of military personnel serving with UNOGIL has increased from 287 to 591. Of these, 469 are ground Observers, 32 are NCO's in support of ground operations, and 90 are in the air section. The number of vehicles has risen from 173 to 290.

8. As a result of this expansion, the scope of ground activities has increased considerably. Since 21 September, eleven additional substations, four permanently manned Observation Posts and one traffic check post have been opened. The total number of permanently manned posts of all types has thus increased from 33 to 49, while previously existing posts have been more heavily manned.

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	Rayak	Substation	2 October
(iii) <u>Chtaura area</u>	Yennta	Traffic Control Post	2 October
	Zahle	Substation	10 October ^{b/}
	American Univ. Farm	Substation	21 October ^{b/}
	Hasbaya	Substation	28 September
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	Chebaa	Observation Post	26 October
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^{a/} El Laboue was changed from a substation to an Observation Post on the same date.

^{b/} These posts had existed previously, but were temporarily closed down in order to deploy personnel closer to the border.

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10. During this period, Observers have had free access to all regions and it has been possible to patrol regularly not only roads along the border or leading to it, but also the roads in the interior. The number of hours spent daily on patrol has increased steadily. Thus the daily average was 140 hours in mid-August, 219 hours in mid-September, 491 hours in mid-October and 932 hours at the end of the month. These figures do not include the hours spent in manning on a twenty-four-hour a day basis the many fixed Observation Posts

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and traffic control posts throughout the country. It must be remembered also that all patrols consist of at least two and many of four Observers. Another indication of the increased activity of ground operations is the distance travelled by UNOGIL vehicles. The average daily distance covered by vehicle patrols had risen by the end of October to a peak of 13,620 kilometres.

11. Air operations have been carried out at the same high rate as that noted at the end of the period covered in the last report. Thus, for purposes of comparison with previous months, it may be noted that the combined totals of sorties and flying-time per month for fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters are as follows:

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This rate has been maintained despite the temporary absence of aircrews returning the four Harvard aircraft to Sweden in the first three weeks of October and of personnel detached to assist in traffic control duties connected with the air evacuation of British troops from Jordan to Cyprus in the latter half of the month.

OBSERVATIONS

12. The Group does not feel it necessary in this report to review the situation in each frontier area, but instead will present some observations of a general character.

13. First, the Group wishes to make clear that no cases of established or suspected infiltration of armed men or smuggling of materiel have been noted by its Observers during the period under review.

14. As has been explained above, traffic control points have been maintained at all major road and rail crossings of the Syrian frontier and it has been possible to inspect the greater part of the traffic passing by. There has been nothing to indicate that it was not normal. Frontier passages at other than major crossings have been infrequent and in all observed cases apparently innocent. The Lebanese customs authorities have now taken over this inspection at all recognized border crossings.

15. The Group has in the past paid close attention to all instances of interference with the freedom of movement of its Observers as a possible indication that infiltration might be occurring. Sporadic instances of such interference have continued to occur and to impose on Observers on the ground and in the air an element of danger.

16. Thus, on 10 October 1958, a United Nations patrol proceeding from Chebaa towards the Syrian border came under heavy fire and withdrew only with great difficulty. On 22 October a United Nations plane flying over Aarsal was fired at and the pilot suffered a wound in the shoulder which fortunately proved not to be serious. Ground patrols in the North Bekaa Valley have also been shot at and there have been several additional cases of Observers being held up and robbed in that area. Such incidents as these have, of course, been a matter of concern to the Group, which has however after due inquiry found that they are to be interpreted not as a pattern of denying access to its Observers to infiltration routes but rather as residual manifestations of the state of insecurity and disorder which has existed in Lebanon over the last six months.

17. The Group has throughout its stay in Lebanon directed its Observers to pay close attention to all instances of the baring of arms throughout the country with a view to determining by changes in the strength of such armed bands whether additional materiel may have been brought into the country. The period covered by the present report has been remarkable for the steady decrease in the number of armed men visible throughout the country. This decrease has been even more marked since the unanimously accepted appointment of the new Government in the middle of October.

18. In its previous report the Group noted two cases in which persons who had presumably entered Lebanon for illegal purposes had left the country. The Group has noted a further significant case of such "exfiltration" during the period under review. On 20 October, some 365 Druzes, the majority of whom were unarmed but some of whom were seen carrying revolvers, proceeded on foot from the Chouf over the Lebanon range to the South Bekaa Valley in the Joub-Jannine region. From there about 250 of them proceeded by truck, bus or jeep via Aita-el-Foukhar and Deir-el-Aachayer to the Syrian Border. The remaining 115 apparently proceeded to Rachaya and other neighbouring villages inside Lebanon.

All stages of this movement came under the close scrutiny of United Nations Observers but despite subsequent specially organized air and ground patrols, no further movements of this kind have been reported. It is reasonable to assume that these Druzes had, in accordance with their traditional practice, previously made their way to the Chouf in support of the Druze forces organized there.

19. When the so-called National Liberation Army in the Deir-el-Aachayer salient was disbanded during the last days of October, it was reported that most of the 150 soldiers belonging thereto had returned to their villages with their rifles but that a number of light machine-guns and other small arms had been sent out of the country. The fact that this movement of men and arms has been occurring across the borders of Lebanon in the reverse direction also tends to confirm the Group's observation that no illegal infiltration or the smuggling of arms into Lebanon are occurring at the present time.

CONCLUSIONS

20. The mandate of the Group under the Security Council resolution of 11 June 1958 has been to ensure that there is no illegal infiltration of personnel or the smuggling of arms or other materiel from across the Lebanese borders. In view of the absence for some time of any reports of infiltration of personnel or smuggling of arms and of the recent marked improvement in the general security situation in Lebanon, and in the relations between Lebanon and its eastern neighbour, the Group has come to the conclusion that its task under the 11 June resolution may now be regarded as completed.

21. The Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly under the terms of General Assembly resolution 1257 (ES-III) of 21 August 1958, has described the Group as presenting a practical arrangement in the sense of that resolution for upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter in relation to Lebanon in the present circumstances and for facilitating the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country. As has been noted, the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon was completed before the end of October. As regards the more general task of fostering peaceful relations between Lebanon and other Arab States, the Group has made an effective contribution by carrying out as efficiently as possible its mandate under the Security Council resolution of 11 June 1958.

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22. Since the task assigned to it may now be regarded as completed, the Group is of the opinion that the withdrawal of UNOGIL should now be undertaken and the Group accordingly submits its recommendation to that effect. It may be mentioned here that a substantial reduction in the force of Observers is to take place as soon as necessary travel arrangements are made, involving those Observers who have been with the Group since the earliest stages of the operation. For the complete withdrawal of the mission, it would be necessary for a detailed plan to be drawn up in consultation with the Lebanese Government, after which appropriate steps could be taken for its execution.

23. As this is perhaps the last substantive report of the mission, it would be proper to add some brief comments of a general nature on the work of the Group. These will of necessity be limited in scope, as the wider impact of the Group's endeavours in the general situation in the area can only be assessed in the light of history.

24. When the first few Observers arrived in Lebanon some five months ago, they found an extremely complex situation, with large groups in different parts of the country in open and armed opposition to the Government, while practically the entire land frontier was open and outside the control of the Government. To enable the function of observation to be performed, it was first necessary to obtain physical access to the areas where such observation would be valuable, namely, along the borders. After patient and persistent efforts, the Observers were able to gain access to one part, and then to another of the frontier, so that eventually a string of substations and Observation Posts came to be established practically throughout the length of the frontier. From these posts and others to the rear and by means of incessant patrolling, the Observers were able to maintain constant vigilance.

25. During the five months, the situation in and around Lebanon has undergone big and sometimes dramatic changes, which have inevitably affected the task of observation. Without departing from the mandate of the Group, it has been necessary to vary the approach to the task from time to time. This has involved the taking of timely decisions, while keeping the standing instructions under constant review; what is more, these decisions have had to be communicated promptly to the Observers in the field and their execution closely supervised. Considering the complex, and in many respects unprecedented, nature of UNOGIL's

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operations, it is a matter of some satisfaction that a proper balance was maintained throughout and UNOGIL's efforts at no point got out of contact with the realities of the changing situation.

26. In general, it may be stated that the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon has been a symbol of the concern of the international community for the welfare and security of Lebanon. Apart from the effects of its mission of observation and reporting, its presence has had a reassuring effect on the population and has influenced the historic events which have taken place. By helping to free the Lebanese situation from its external complications, it has contributed to the creation of conditions under which the Lebanese people themselves could arrive at a peaceful solution of their internal problems.

27. In expressing these views, the Group feels it appropriate to pay tribute to the devotion to duty shown by the Military Observers under its control. The success of an operation such as the present one depends on the application of moral force to circumstances where otherwise only the use of arms would be effective. The Military Observers, armed only with the moral authority of the United Nations and their own determination and courage, have been able to fulfil their task of peace and have won for themselves the respect of the people in all areas in which they have operated. In doing so they have, even in the recent improved circumstances in Lebanon, repeatedly undergone hardship and dangers, which have been described in detail in this and previous reports.

28. The distinctions of national origin have proved to be superficial in relation to the deep significance of the common task which the Observers were called upon to perform. Observers from twenty-one countries from different parts of the world have co-operated effectively and in a spirit of comradeship not only in circumstances of danger and under the stimulus of urgent events but also in the carrying out of routine duties and patrols. If, as it believes, the Group has been able to make a useful contribution to the restoration of more peaceful conditions in Lebanon, it is because it has been able to base its reports on the objective information faithfully supplied to it by its Observers on the ground and in the air.

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29. The Group wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his co-operation and constant support in providing the Group with the necessary facilities for carrying out its task throughout the operation. The Group wishes also to thank the staff members of the United Nations Secretariat assigned to the mission, who at all levels have made a significant contribution to its success.

30. Finally, the Group wishes to express its appreciation to the Lebanese Government for its co-operation and for providing the necessary conditions for the Group to fulfil its mission in an independent and objective manner. The Group's appreciation is also due to the people of Lebanon from all walks of life for the many evidences of their courtesy, hospitality and friendship.





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21. The Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly under the terms of General Assembly resolution 1237 (ES-III) of 21 August 1958, has described the Group as presenting a practical arrangement in the sense of that resolution for upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter in relation to Lebanon in the present circumstances and for facilitating the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country. As has been noted, the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon was completed before the end of October. As regards the more general task of fostering peaceful relations between Lebanon and other Arab States, the Group has made an effective contribution by carrying out as efficiently as possible its mandate under the Security Council resolution of 11 June 1958.

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22. Since the task assigned to it may now be regarded as completed, the Group is of the opinion that the withdrawal of UNOGIL should now be undertaken and the Group accordingly submits its recommendation to that effect. It may be mentioned here that a substantial reduction in the force of Observers is to take place as soon as necessary travel arrangements are made, involving those Observers who have been with the Group since the earliest stages of the operation. For the complete withdrawal of the mission, it would be necessary for a detailed plan to be drawn up in consultation with the Lebanese Government, after which appropriate steps could be taken for its execution.

23. As this is perhaps the last substantive report of the mission, it would be proper to add some brief comments of a general nature on the work of the Group. These will of necessity be limited in scope, as the wider impact of the Group's endeavours in the general situation in the area can only be assessed in the light of history.

24. When the first few Observers arrived in Lebanon some five months ago, they found an extremely complex situation, with large groups in different parts of the country in open and armed opposition to the Government, while practically the entire land frontier was open and outside the control of the Government. To enable the function of observation to be performed, it was first necessary to obtain physical access to the areas where such observation would be valuable, namely, along the borders. After patient and persistent efforts, the Observers were able to gain access to one part, and then to another of the frontier, so that eventually a string of substations and Observation Posts came to be established practically throughout the length of the frontier. From these posts and others to the rear and by means of incessant patrolling, the Observers were able to maintain constant vigilance.

25. During the five months, the situation in and around Lebanon has undergone big and sometimes dramatic changes, which have inevitably affected the task of observation. Without departing from the mandate of the Group, it has been necessary to vary the approach to the task from time to time. This has involved the taking of timely decisions, while keeping the standing instructions under constant review; what is more, these decisions have had to be communicated promptly to the Observers in the field and their execution closely supervised. Considering the complex, and in many respects unprecedented, nature of UNOGIL's

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operations, it is a matter of some satisfaction that a proper balance was maintained throughout and UNOGIL's efforts at no point got out of contact with the realities of the changing situation.

26. In general, it may be stated that the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon has been a symbol of the concern of the international community for the welfare and security of Lebanon. Apart from the effects of its mission of observation and reporting, its presence has had a reassuring effect on the population and has influenced the historic events which have taken place. By helping to free the Lebanese situation from its external complications, it has contributed to the creation of conditions under which the Lebanese people themselves could arrive at a peaceful solution of their internal problems.

27. In expressing these views, the Group feels it appropriate to pay tribute to the devotion to duty shown by the Military Observers under its control. The success of an operation such as the present one depends on the application of moral force to circumstances where otherwise only the use of arms would be effective. The Military Observers, armed only with the moral authority of the United Nations and their own determination and courage, have been able to fulfil their task of peace and have won for themselves the respect of the people in all areas in which they have operated. In doing so they have, even in the recent improved circumstances in Lebanon, repeatedly undergone hardship and dangers, which have been described in detail in this and previous reports.

28. The distinctions of national origin have proved to be superficial in relation to the deep significance of the common task which the Observers were called upon to perform. Observers from twenty-one countries from different parts of the world have co-operated effectively and in a spirit of comradeship not only in circumstances of danger and under the stimulus of urgent events but also in the carrying out of routine duties and patrols. If, as it believes, the Group has been able to make a useful contribution to the restoration of more peaceful conditions in Lebanon, it is because it has been able to base its reports on the objective information faithfully supplied to it by its Observers on the ground and in the air.

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29. The Group wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his co-operation and constant support in providing the Group with the necessary facilities for carrying out its task throughout the operation. The Group wishes also to thank the staff members of the United Nations Secretariat assigned to the mission, who at all levels have made a significant contribution to its success.

30. Finally, the Group wishes to express its appreciation to the Lebanese Government for its co-operation and for providing the necessary conditions for the Group to fulfil its mission in an independent and objective manner. The Group's appreciation is also due to the people of Lebanon from all walks of life for the many evidences of their courtesy, hospitality and friendship.

