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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-first year

Letter dated 27 May 1976 from the Permanent Representative of France
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The letter addressed to you by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria on 25 May, which was circulated as an official document of the General Assembly and the Security Council (A/31/95-S/12084), contains a number of untrue allegations about French policy towards Lebanon which my Government must strongly refute.

The policy of France towards Lebanon is motivated by a single concern, namely to preserve the unity, integrity and sovereignty of this friendly State. The French authorities have repeatedly stated that it was incumbent upon the Lebanese themselves to find, without any external interference, the political solution which alone can bring to an end the present divisive tragedy.

If the political process begun by the election of a new President of the Lebanese Republic is to go forward, however, it may be necessary to establish machinery to consolidate the cease-fire. Should it be deemed helpful by the President of the Lebanese Republic and the parties concerned with the civil war, that is to say the various Lebanese parties and the interested Arab countries, France would be prepared to make its contribution to such machinery. It is to this "preparedness" that the President of the French Republic and the French authorities have referred on various occasions.

France's offer was officially announced by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs in the National Assembly on 6 May in the following terms:

"The major problem which the new authorities must tackle remains that of security. France, as has already been stated, would not shirk its duty if all the leaders and all the parties to the Lebanese conflict were to ask it to participate in the establishment on the spot of security

* A/31/50.

arrangements whose purpose would be to assure, once the fighting had stopped, an independent new start for Lebanese political life in the mood of fundamental unity which must reunite all those who, in their diversity, make up that country."

Far from constituting an external intervention in the affairs of Lebanon, this offer - which would be made good only if there was a request from the constituted authorities of that country and a consensus of all the parties concerned with the conflict - is based on the conviction that it is essential to enable the Lebanese to determine the basis of their reconciliation.

The French initiative showed France's willingness to make, if this is desired, a temporary and limited, but specific, contribution to the process of restoring peace.

Given this context, it was particularly inappropriate to suggest that there was an alleged threat of military intervention by France in Lebanon.

International morality cannot be expected to remain indifferent and passive to a tragedy which has already claimed tens of thousands of victims and which is claiming hundreds more with each passing day, particularly as the people involved are esteemed by the entire international community and live in an extremely sensitive area. It is especially out of place to refer to imperialism when speaking of the independent offer which my country made in full respect for Lebanese and Arab sovereignty. I should like to reaffirm this respect in this letter and also to testify to the sincere emotion which the ordeal of a friendly country has aroused in the French people.

On the instructions of my Government, I request you to have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 28 of the preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the thirty-first regular session of the General Assembly, and as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) L. de GUIRINGAUD
