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Note by the Secretary-General

The following is the text of the reply dated 25 August 1969 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the Secretary-General's letter of 16 August, the text of which was circulated to the Security Council as document S/9393:

"Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to your letter to me of 16 August 1969 regarding the situation in the Israel-Lebanon sector and, on instructions from my Government, to make the following observations on it.

You state that 'I find this situation, involving serious breaches of the cease-fire, very disturbing and I feel obliged to do whatever I can to alleviate it'. My Government fully shares your concern. Israel's policy rests firmly on the need to advance towards agreement on a just and lasting peace, and in the meantime to ensure reciprocal observance of the cease-fire.

The cause of the disturbed state of the cease-fire in this particular sector is clear. Armed terrorist groups have established bases on Lebanese territory and openly operate across the cease-fire lines, by means of firing on Israel villages, infiltration, mine-laying, sabotage and other acts of armed violence in defiance of the cease-fire. Having accepted the cease-fire, it is the unquestioned duty of the Lebanese Government to prevent all violations of it from Lebanese territory whether by regular or by irregular forces. When Lebanon unequivocally accepts and effectively discharges this obligation the cease-fire will be properly maintained, and the situation will cease to be disturbing.

My Government earnestly hopes that the relative quiet previously existing in this sector will be restored. For the reasons explained above, the responsibility for bringing that about rests with the Government of Lebanon. It is self-evident that when Israel is subject to armed attack, it has the inherent right and duty of self-defense.

With regard to your proposal to station United Nations Observers in the Israel-Lebanon sector, it is noted that their function would be that of 'observing and maintaining the Security Council cease-fire'.

It appears from the reply to you from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon, dated 18 August 1969 (S/9393/Add.1), that the Lebanese Government rejects the above functions, and insists that the Military Observers be stationed only in the framework of the 1949 Armistice Agreement. However, the armistice period is now behind us, and since June 1967 the international policy is to move beyond the cease-fire to permanent peace. Since the Lebanese reaction does not represent a positive reply to your proposal, there is no point in my Government studying it further in detail. If and when we are informed that Lebanon is willing to accept your proposal as defined in your letter, we shall furnish you with our considered views on it. My Government is willing to work for the effective re-enforcement of the cease-fire in the Israel-Lebanese sector, which differs basically from that on the Suez Canal or on the Israel-Syrian sector.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Yosef TEKOAH  
Permanent Representative of Israel  
to the United Nations"