

relationship between Israel's withdrawal and the creation of conditions which would stabilize the situation in that most sensitive part of the world, and promote the prospects of a permanent settlement there, is not a simple one". He and other speakers after him went on to examine the problems of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and the situation that would obtain in the Gaza strip. Mr. Pearson explained the Canadian views on these matters:

Our meeting last Friday and the statement from the representative of Israel which we have heard this afternoon, mark, I hope, the turning point in the crisis which has been facing this Assembly for many weeks. The dangers and the risks, which were inherent in the continued occupation of non-Israeli territory by the armed forces of Israel, should now disappear, provided the Israeli withdrawal is followed by appropriate United Nations action. It was with the full recognition of these dangers that Canada joined others in this Assembly in efforts to bring about complete withdrawal of Israel from those areas, but in circumstances that would avoid and not provide the seeds for future conflict.

We warmly welcome Israel's decision as a right and a wise one, and as showing a sense of international responsibility. We feel that certain assumptions and expectations that Israel has mentioned in connection with the completion of her withdrawal are reasonable ones, as we understand them.

As the Assembly is aware, my delegation has, as have many other delegations, made its own assumptions in speaking about arrangements which we believe should follow immediately upon—not before, but immediately upon—withdrawal. We did not, and we do not now, regard these arrangements as conditions governing or prior to the withdrawal. We felt, however, that it was important to come to some prior understanding about them, so that immediately after withdrawal they might be put into force and thereby help to create conditions in the area which would prevent a return to the deplorable conditions which existed before the armed intervention of 29 October and which themselves were largely responsible for that action.

Every Member of the Assembly, including Israel, has a right to assume that the United Nations will take some positive, fair and constructive action to this end. Our own view on the necessity for such action has been given in the statement which I made in the Assembly on 26 February and on earlier occasions, so I can be brief this afternoon.

Concerning the Gulf of Aqaba and the Straits of Tiran, I suggested then that there should be no interference with innocent passage through those waters, nor the assertion of any claim to belligerent rights there. I was not suggesting, and I am not now suggesting, that legal rights in those waters should be determined by this Assembly in any particular way, or that this determination, which would have to be made by a legal body, should be prejudiced by us. I do not conceive it to be the function of this Assembly to decide legal questions. What I do suggest, however, is that in order to maintain a situation of peace and quiet, in order to minimize the chance of a new outbreak of fighting, the Assembly should recommend, and the parties should agree, as a political and not a legal act, that there should be no interference with the innocent passage of ships through the waters concerned. That would be one way of bringing about an improved situation in that area.

Does any Member of this Assembly believe that interference with such innocent passage will not provoke conflict, and thereby threaten the peace of the area? Is it not then our duty to do what we can to avoid such a result? If we feel that way, then, in my view, we do not discharge that duty merely by coming to certain conclusions regarding the international legal aspects of the question which remain to be determined.

So far as the use of the United Nations Emergency Force in the Gulf of Aqaba area is concerned, I believe it is common ground in this Assembly that UNEF should, immediately after the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces, move into the area to secure and supervise the cease-fire and the withdrawal. This does not mean, in our view, that UNEF would occupy Sharm al-Shaikh indefinitely, nor even until there had been some formal agreement or decision about navigation in the Gulf and in the Straits. But it does mean, as we see it, that upon the withdrawal of Israeli forces there would be such arrangements for the deployment of UNEF at that point and for the time being