

*Supply—National Defence*

follow—abstained with regard to the proposal for a United Nations force which they have subsequently found, I think, to be very helpful to them in the solution of the difficulties we are all in now. That abstention on their part, from their point of view, was a perfectly reasonable one, just as abstention on our part under certain circumstances seems to us also to be perfectly reasonable.

The hon. member for St. Paul's and others have asked me a good many questions about the functions of this force, how it is going to operate, what is the chain of command, and what is the relationship of this force to the government of the country in which it is operating. It is not easy to answer all these questions at the present time because the organization, the function and the principles under which the force is to operate, its relationship not only to the government of the country in which it is operating but to the governments which have sent troops to the force—all these things we are now trying to work out. I assure my hon. friend that that work is certainly not completed. The force is operating under the resolution to which I referred earlier, which is now in effect and which authorizes it to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in accordance with all the terms of a previous resolution, the resolution which was passed two or three days before, and which in general does lay down the functions of the force.

Those functions under that earlier resolution were to bring about a cease-fire, and that has been done; to bring about the withdrawal of forces behind the armistice line; to desist from raids across the armistice line into neighbouring territory; to observe scrupulously the provisions of the armistice agreement, and to take steps to reopen the Suez canal and to restore and secure freedom of navigation.

The assembly has ordered all these things to be done, and the force itself is to police the doing of them. In line with certain principles and functions which have been approved by the assembly and which are put out in detail in a United Nations document which has been tabled, A-3302 of November 6, this is the final report of the secretary general on the plans for this emergency force, and especially paragraphs 6 to 12 which outline his idea of how it should function.

Now, it is of cardinal importance that in this functioning the force should be under United Nations control and not under the control or dictation of any one member of the United Nations, including Egypt. I tried to

make it as clear as I could the other day, and I have tried to make it clear at the United Nations general assembly, that we would not accept any other interpretation of the functions, the tasks and the duties of this force.

I know that in this debate some very hard and harsh words have been used against the dictator of Egypt, and I certainly am not here to defend him. But I think it is also well to remember there is a relationship between this force and the Arab peoples, and we certainly do not want to divide ourselves completely from the Arab peoples in these matters. Therefore we have to recognize, I think, that those peoples, especially the people in Egypt as represented for better or for worse by their government, do have a special relationship with a force which is operating in their territory. I can assure the committee again, however, if assurance is needed, that we would not accept any principle of action at the United Nations, or participate for long in any force, if that force is in danger of being controlled and dominated by the leader of the government of Egypt. That has already come up in the advisory committee of seven and it will come up again. I can give the committee an assurance that that is the stand we will take, and I am quite sure we will have the support of practically all the members of the committee in that stand and the support of the secretary general himself.

I have listened in previous discussions, Mr. Chairman, to a good many statements to the effect that the action of the United Kingdom and France has saved the world from Russian domination and control of the Middle East. Well, I am not going to go into that at this time, but there is another side to this question. We should also ask ourselves in considering all sides of the question whether the action that has been taken has weakened or strengthened the position of the U.S.S.R. in this area by giving the U.S.S.R. a special relationship to Egypt and to the Arab and Asian states, which has been illustrated by some of the alignments in the United Nations at this time. I do not for one minute criticize the motives of the governments of the United Kingdom and France in intervening in Egypt at this time. I may have thought their intervention was not wise, but I do not criticize their purposes.

It has been suggested, and this is one of the questions that was asked me in the previous debate, whether by our own actions in not aligning ourselves on all occasions at the United Nations with the United Kingdom and France we had not contributed to the weakening and division of the commonwealth and the weakening and division of the western coalition.