

ary 24, 'be followed by UNEF in the same way as in other parts of Sinai', in order to assist in maintaining quiet in the area and in preventing conflict. This would be in accordance with the purposes already laid down by this Assembly for the Force.

"Fourth, Gaza strip.

"This is perhaps the most complicated and difficult of the arrangements to be decided, as it has political, social, economic, and humanitarian aspects. We are dealing here with three hundred thousand people, not merely with territory.

"I should like, therefore, to go into this problem in somewhat more detail.

GAZA STRIP

"The Gaza strip was a part of the mandate territory of Palestine. It is not Egyptian territory. Its indigenous population of 60,000 to 70,000 is Palestinian Arab, and is now greatly augmented by some 267,000 refugees, also Palestinian Arabs. It was occupied by Egypt immediately after the termination of the British mandate in May, 1948. This occupation pending final settlement was acknowledged in the Egyptian-Israeli Armistice Agreement of 1949.

"Egypt has not annexed the strip and claims to have no intention of doing so. The territory had never been occupied by Israel prior to the October 29, 1956 invasion, and since then Israel has also disavowed any intention of annexing the strip, though measures and plans for economic development of the area, taken or projected, may indicate an intention to open the territory to Israeli settlement. Should this happen, however, the result would probably be that most of the indigenous Arab inhabitants of the strip would eventually be forced into dependence or destitution as the territory cannot support even the small normal Arab population.

"Surely there would be little logic to an arrangement whereby Israel would assume responsibility for the administration of a territory not belonging to it, and where it remained in opposition to a decision of the UN Assembly and against the wishes of the Arab inhabitants, for most of whom, as refugees, Israel in these new circumstances might also have to accept responsibility.

"In the discharge of its responsibilities for refugees, the UN has not recently enjoyed satisfactory relations with the administration of this territory. That situation would be even more difficult, perhaps impossible, if Israel remained in control in the conditions I have just mentioned. The effect of a controversy of this kind would be disastrous for the Arab refugees in Gaza and serious for the Arab refugee problem as a whole. Nor could the UN take on any new role for security in and against the Gaza strip if Israel insisted on remaining there in spite of the Armistice Agreement and of repeated UN Assembly decisions that she should withdraw.

"Yet the key issue in this area, from the Israeli standpoint, is security against any resumption of incursions or raids into Israel from Gaza territory.

KEY ISSUE

"From the UN standpoint, this is also the key issue; how to provide security on both sides after Israeli withdrawal, on the basis of the Assembly's resolution of November 2, 1956, and of later resolutions, as well as of the reports of the Secretary-General.

"Continued occupation of the Gaza strip by Israeli armed forces or by Israeli police and civilian administration after the withdrawal of her troops, and in the face of bitter Egyptian hostility, cannot in my view, give the security sought, for the following reasons:

"(a) The prolongation of Israeli occupation of non-Israeli territory in the face of Assembly decisions to the contrary, and in violation of the Armistice Agreement, will only incite new provocations, perhaps of greater magnitude than any hitherto. The emotions aroused would be almost certain to increase the likelihood of a resumption of incursions and raids from outside the strip, even though the protection afforded against them might be increased within the strip.

"(b) Israeli occupation of Gaza would only shift a little to the southwest the line between Israel and Egypt across which the raids might come. Since there will always be a line or frontier between Egypt and Israel, the only sure way to stop the raids across the Egyptian-Israeli border, wherever it may be, is by political action based on the sincere will of the Governments of Egypt and Israel, with UN assistance and supervision, to end such raids and incursions and to abide by the terms of the Armistice Agreement. Assurance of this intention, given by the Government of Egypt, has been repeated by the Secretary-General in his last two reports. It seems obvious that continuing Israeli occupation of non-Israeli territory beyond the armistice line will nullify that assurance. It seems equally obvious that such assurances without any intervention by the UN to facilitate and ensure their actual fulfilment are not likely to satisfy the Israeli Government. The problem is, therefore, two-fold, and requires for its solution Egyptian and Israeli and UN action.

"What, then, should be the nature of this action?

"First in priority and essential to all other steps, Israel should withdraw from the Gaza strip. This action would be in accordance with the previous decisions of the Assembly, and implicit in a return to the scrupulous observance of the Armistice Agreement.

"At the same time, the Assembly should now provide for effective UN action to ensure that the area would not be used as a base for raids and incursions against Israel after its withdrawal.