

Although these observations may be regarded as an oversimplification of what we all recognize as a very complex question, I suggest that they are not altogether inappropriate at this time, when the Assembly is taking note of compliance with resolutions on withdrawal and of constructive measures which we all hope will bring about a new and improved atmosphere in that sorely troubled area.

The Assembly concluded this phase of the discussion of Item 66 with a warm expression of thanks by Mr. Fawzi to the President of the Assembly, the Secretary-General, and the Secretariat for their "tireless and selfless efforts" during the past months, and to the Members of the United Nations for their understanding and support.

Thus the "turning-point" which had been sought had apparently been reached: the cease-fire had now been followed by the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Egypt and of Israeli forces from the Gaza strip. But a turning-point is not the end of a journey, and a difficult road still lay ahead. Indeed, he would have been a hardy man who admitted no possibility of a return to hostilities.

The risks inherent in the situation were recognized by the Assembly in its action of adopting a resolution providing for the re-convening of the Assembly, if necessary, to consider either of two critical areas, of which the Middle East was one.

It was suggested early in this paper that those elements—withdrawal, the UNEF, and the Suez Canal—were interrelated. Through the various discussions of "understandings" and "assumptions" the last two kept appearing as the major factors. The Emergency Force had in March a total strength of about 6,000. Of this total Canada had already supplied about 800 army and 300 RCAF personnel, and was in the process of meeting a United Nations request for a reconnaissance unit of 105 officers and men.<sup>(1)</sup> The Force, which had gained experience and prestige, was proving its capacity for the role assigned to it by the General Assembly. The question that remained was exactly how that role was to be developed. A unit had moved into Sharm al-Shaikh as the Israeli forces withdrew. How long would it stay there, and what bearing would its presence have on freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran? A second question arose for UNEF in the Gaza strip. From the Israeli point of view the best arrangement would be for UNEF to be made responsible both for administration and for security; especially it must be in a position to prevent raids into Israel. It had been argued both by the Secretary-General and some delegations—including the Canadian Delegation—that it should be stationed on both sides of the demarcation line; that, however, had never been accepted by the Government of Israel. Following the Israeli withdrawal, the United Nations Commander announced that the Force was assuming responsibility for civil affairs in Gaza, acting on instruction from the Secretary-General that the take-over of civilian and military control would be "exclusively by the United Nations Emergency Force in the first instance". However, it was announced in Cairo on March 11 that an administrative Governor, General Hassan Abdel Latif had been appointed for the Gaza strip, and on March 14 the Governor arrived in Gaza. Thus the achievement of a satisfactory correlation between the Egyptian administration and UNEF became necessary.

<sup>(1)</sup> Reports of delays in this unit and additional ordnance personnel reaching Egypt gave rise to the apprehension that the Egyptian Government had made objections. Such, however, was apparently not the case, and by March 20 the units were in Egypt.