

Supply—External Affairs

there must be certain political guarantees which will produce stability. This will require understanding on both sides and some firm and agreed decisions by the United Nations security council to back them up. That cannot be done unless the four permanent members of the security council can get together. I leave hon. members to form their own opinions about the ease with which this can be accomplished, notwithstanding the encouraging sign the other night when at least they agreed on a cease fire resolution. But to bring the Israeli forces back behind the borders of last week, without doing anything about the situation in the gulf of Aqaba, would not provide for peace but merely a temporary absence of hostilities.

So, I suggest, secondly, that regardless of the legal controversy, which can be sent to the International Court for decision, there should be no exercise by those who claim the right of sovereignty, whether that claim is valid or not—and I am not attaching any judgment to that—to interfere with any innocent passage through the strait of Tiran and the gulf of Aqaba to Elath, which should be recognized by all as an Israeli port.

The third point is that something should be done about the right of Israeli ships, which right was exercised by all other ships until a day or so ago, to navigate the Suez canal. There have been decisions by the security council of the United Nations affirming that right, but in practice the affirmation has not meant very much to Israel.

Back in March, 1957 again, the right hon. Leader of the Opposition asked me whether I agreed with "the statement made yesterday" by Mr. Dulles that the denial to Israel of the right of freedom of shipping in the Suez canal was an unlawful act on the part of Egypt. I said in answer to that question:

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the first question the policy of this government—

And I am sure it is the policy of this parliament.

—has already been stated, that in its view navigation of the Suez canal should be free to the ships of all nations, and that would include Israel.

The fourth point is the establishment once again, in spite of our somewhat disillusioning experiences in the last few weeks, of a United Nations presence in force between the armies that have been fighting, and a presence which will operate on both sides of the border. There has been a great reluctance on the part of Israel to allow United Nations truce observation groups to operate on her territory.

[Mr. Pearson.]

This is one respect in which I think she should change her policy and on which agreement should be reached.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Was it reluctance or refusal?

Mr. Pearson: She turned down the request that they should operate on Israeli soil, just as the United Arab Republic could have turned down the request that UNEF operate on her soil. This UN supervision could be done by enlarged observer groups, as we have already discussed in the house, under UNTSO, constituted and operating in accordance with effective and agreed arrangements to be worked out by the United Nations. That must be done.

I had an interesting exchange with the Secretary General of the United Nations about the withdrawal of the Canadian contingent from UNEF on such short notice. The Secretary General wrote me—and this letter has been made public—and paid great tribute to the work of the Canadians in this force and to the work of Canada in the interests of peace keeping. He said:

Canada has thus given unstinting and vital support to UNEF both at the headquarters of the United Nations and in the field. Irrespective of the circumstances of the withdrawal of UNEF and the consequences of that withdrawal, ten and a half years of successful service to peace is a historic achievement.

U Thant went on:

Canada's large role in that achievement and your government's unflinching understanding of the requirements of UN peace keeping operations are widely recognized and appreciated here.

I replied to that letter the other day. I think this communication has also been made public. I thanked the Secretary General for his generous references to the men of our force and said this, which I hope will commend itself to members of the House of Commons:

Despite current difficulties faced by the United Nations in the peace keeping field, I am hopeful that it will be possible to profit from the experience gained in UNEF and to use the lessons learned, to develop, in due course, within the framework of the United Nations, more effective machinery "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", in the words of the charter.

Then I went on:

In the continuing effort that must be carried on to plan for United Nations peace keeping forces, organized and established in a way which will avoid the disturbing experience we have just gone through in the disbanding of UNEF, the United Nations can count on our full support. Recent events show that the work of the United Nations in the