

There has already been more than enough murder in the Gaza strip, and the U N cannot be indirectly responsible for more. We owe protection to the refugees and we certainly owe protection to the servants of U N relief and works agency who have been carrying on so heroically in the face of such obstacles, difficulties and dangers in the Gaza strip. Provision, therefore, must be made for a peaceful transition from the administration of Israel to something no less strong and effective and at the same time more generally acceptable. Such a transition can be effected only by negotiation, and such negotiation, which should be both speedy and thorough, can only be conducted by direct agents of the U N. There is no sense in pretending that, under present circumstances, it could be undertaken between Egyptians and Israelis alone. The good offices of a third party must be interposed, and this can only be the U N.

This is all the more desirable because after Israel's withdrawal, the U N should, in our view and by agreement with Egypt, accept responsibility to the maximum possible extent for establishing and maintaining effective civil administration in the territory; in fostering economic development and social welfare, in maintaining law and order. UNRWA is already there, with an experienced and efficient administrative nucleus. The U N could also provide other help through the U N technical assistance machinery, the resources of its Secretariat, and expert consultants recruited for specific purposes. In this way there would be built up in Gaza, in co-operation with Egypt and with Israel, a U.N. civil administration.

To co-ordinate and make effective arrangements to this end the Secretary-General might decide to appoint a U N Commissioner for Gaza. Working with the Commander of UNEF and the Director of UNRWA, and after consultation with Egyptian and Israeli representatives as well as with refugee and other local Arab leaders, he could arrange to bring about with all possible speed the replacement of the present Israeli civil administration of the area. In this way, and perhaps in this way only, we should be able to effect the withdrawal of Israel, with order and speed, and in such a manner as to protect the interests of the inhabitants, and of both Egypt and Israel as well.

After the replacement had been completed, this U N Commissioner should, in my view, remain in Gaza where he would have chief responsibility for all U N activities there, including those of UNEF inside the strip. He would be concerned with the supervision of the Armistice Agreement, including maintenance of the cease-fire observers' functions, checking and reporting on alleged incidents of violation. In discharging these responsibilities he would work through UNEF rather than UNTSO, though this would be without prejudice, of course, to the role of UNTSO in the other three armistice agreements.