

In this connexion, the scope and the nature of Egypt's earlier consent was brought up yesterday by the representative of Australia and referred to by more than one speaker this afternoon. On that point the Secretary-General made, I think, an important clarification yesterday when he said: "To all the extent that movements of the United Nations Force are supposed to follow from the duties of the Force in relation to the cease-fire and withdrawal, the matter ... has been regarded as non-controversial as it is covered by Egypt's general consent while, on the other hand, as regards activities of the United Nations Force which would extend beyond what is covered by this consent, an additional consent has been considered necessary."

The Secretary-General also said that whatever may be the legal situation under the Charter regarding consent, "in practice, the consent must obviously be qualified in such a way as to provide a reasonable basis for the operation of the United Nations Force."

I am satisfied myself that the United Nations Force, which has already operated effectively and non-controversially and has given us hope for the future role of the United Nations in the supervision of peace can, if it is given the opportunity and the authority, conduct these new peace supervision operations equally effectively. Absurd suspicions have been cast on this Force by the representative of the Soviet Union and by the representative of Bulgaria, I think it was, this afternoon; absurd suspicions were cast on this Force as an agency for the return of colonialism in a new form to this area. All I can say in this connexion is that the Force is under the control not of any one Power, either here in this Assembly or on the spot, but it is under the control of the United Nations and that it is a Force consisting of important elements from those well-known "colonial Powers" India, Indonesia, Yugoslavia and Finland.

When doubts about this Force are expressed by the countries of the Middle East, I accept the honesty of their doubts although I do not believe that they are justified. I can assure them that as far as our Delegation is concerned -- and I am sure that it is true of practically all other delegations that have supported this Force -- we have never at any time conceived of this Force as anything which could remotely be called an occupation force. It is not a national army or a collection of national contingents; it is an emergency force from the United Nations composed of units from countries -- the smaller countries -- of diverse backgrounds and policies, which is not in a position to enforce its will on any country, nor has it the power to do so under the Charter if it so desired. As a member of our Delegation said last December in his statement in the General Assembly, the United Nations Emergency Force is not an instrument for enforcing a settlement but it can be an instrument to assist in establishing conditions in the area which would be of benefit to both the parties concerned and advantageous to peace and security.