

return to the scrupulous observance of the Armistice Agreement.

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

I have just spoken about the deployment of UNEF along the demarcation line. In the Gaza strip, this deployment would serve not only as an effective interposition of UNEF between the armed forces of Egypt and Israel, but as a screen against incursions, raids and retaliatory attacks across the line from either side. Furthermore, in a transitional period, UNEF and other appropriate agencies of the U.N. would be given functions within the Gaza strip which would contribute towards safeguarding life and property, would guarantee good civilian administration, would assure the maximum assistance to the Palestine refugees there, and would protect and foster the economic development of the Gaza strip and its people.

In this regard we have heard with great interest the expression of confidence by the Secretary-General on the attitude of the Government of Egypt towards the necessary arrangements in the Gaza strip with regard to the withdrawal of Israel. Such a statement by the Secretary-General is not to be taken lightly.

The military aspect of withdrawal is relatively uncomplicated. Immediately the Israeli forces leave, the UNEF should enter. As the Armistice Agreement limits Egyptian forces to "defensive" elements only, and as the UNEF will already be deployed along the armistice line, and as the strip is so narrow, the Government of Egypt should not envisage the return of her armed forces to this area after the Israeli troops have withdrawn.

So far as the civil administration of the territory is concerned, the position is more difficult and more complicated. Legally under the Armistice Agreement, the civil administration is to be Egyptian and not Israeli. But there are important practical considerations which qualify this legal position and which cannot be ignored in the replacement of the present administration. It is perfectly clear that we should not simply command the Israeli civil administration to depart in a night. Any one who believes that this is possible should study carefully the special report of the Director of UNRWA on the agency's operations in the Gaza strip and ponder upon the situation which exists in that area. We have here an extremely explosive situation which could very easily get out of control. In this tiny area are crowded over two hundred thousand refugees and a much smaller native population. They are bitter and frustrated, administered by strangers; rebellious, riven by frictions, and in a mood, I have no doubt, to erupt in violence and bloodshed once firm control is removed.