

on the sincere will of the Governments of Egypt and Israel, with United Nations assistance and supervision, to end such raids and incursions and to abide by the terms of the Armistice Agreement. Assurance of this intention, given by the Government of Egypt, has been repeated by the Secretary-General in his last two reports. It seems obvious to me that continuing Israeli occupation of non-Israeli territory beyond the armistice line will nullify that assurance. It seems also equally obvious to me at least, that such assurances without any intervention by the United Nations to facilitate and ensure their actual fulfilment are not likely to satisfy the Government of Israel. The problem is, therefore, two-fold, and requires for its solution Egyptian, Israeli and indeed United Nations action.

What then should be the nature of this action in respect of this Gaza territory? First, I suggest, in priority and essential to all other steps, Israel should withdraw from the Gaza strip in accordance with previous decisions of the General Assembly, and implicit in a return to the scrupulous observance of the Armistice Agreement. At the same time, this Assembly should now provide for effective United Nations action to ensure that the area would not be used as a base for raids and incursions in the future 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 United Nations 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 all heard, I am sure with great interest, the expression of confidence by the Secretary-General on the attitude of the Government of Egypt toward the necessary arrangements in Gaza after the withdrawal of Israel. Statements of this kind by the Secretary-General are obviously not to be taken lightly. The military aspect of this withdrawal is relatively uncomplicated. Immediately the Israeli forces leave, the UNEF should enter. As the Armistice Agreement limits in any event Egyptian forces to "defensive" elements only, and as UNEF will already be deployed along the armistice line, and as the strip is so very narrow itself, the Government of Egypt should not in our view envisage the return of her own 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 complicated.

Legally, under the Armistice Agreement, the civil administration is to be Egyptian and not Israeli. But there are important practical considerations, I think, 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. Anyone 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 there. We have here an extremely explosive situation which could very easily get out of control. In this tiny area are crowded 267,000 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 if firm control were removed.

There has already been more than enough murder in the Gaza strip, and the United Nations cannot be indirectly responsible for more. We owe protection to the refugees and we certainly owe protection to the servants of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency who have been carrying on so heroically in the face of such great obstacles, difficulties and dangers in that strip.

Therefore, provision must surely 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 United Nations. 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, in our view, can only be the United Nations.