

*External Affairs*

which could be and, indeed, were interpreted in different ways by different members of the assembly.

That delay after February 2 on the part of Israel to withdraw her forces occasioned by the causes I have indicated, was met by the tabling of an Arab resolution for sanctions, that is, for force to bring about withdrawal. Sanctions can be economic; they can be financial; and, indeed, they can be military. And we ought to know now from the lesson of the league of nations in the thirties, in connection with the Italo-Abysinian conflict, unless there is strong and general agreement to see sanctions through to the end, even if that end might be military action, and if there is not the necessary willingness to take national action to enforce sanctions, then it is idle, even worse than idle, to consider applying them.

Our position when the sanctions resolution was tabled at the United Nations assembly was that we were opposed to sanctions as being unjustified, as impracticable, as unlikely to accomplish the purposes which they had in mind, and as a recognition of the failure of negotiation, which we thought was premature.

And so we—our delegation—put forward our own proposals on February 26—certain positive proposals which we thought would accomplish the purpose we had in mind. I will come back to them later; what I am trying to give now is the chronological story of what happened in New York.

After this sanctions resolution was tabled, with no agreement on a resolution of the kind I have indicated with regard to arrangements to follow withdrawal, the matter was moved to Washington for discussions through diplomatic channels between representatives of Israel, the United States and France. As a result of those discussions, Israel was persuaded to withdraw her forces both civil and military from Sharm al-Shaikh and the Gaza area—not on assurances contained in any assembly resolution, except that of February 2, but on certain assumptions and expectations which the government of Israel made at that time and which were announced to the General Assembly.

What were these? They are very important in attempting to understand what is going on there now. They were put to the assembly in a statement by the foreign minister of Israel on March 1—these assumptions and expectations. One was that the gulf of Aqaba and the straits of Tiran would be considered as international waters, and that there would be free and innocent passage for all shipping through them, and that the United States government would support this

proposition. Second, that the United Nations emergency force would move into the Sharm al-Shaikh area and not be moved out of that area until the matter had been considered by the assembly advisory committee of seven. Then in respect of Gaza which was the danger point at the moment, Mrs. Meir laid down these assumptions:

(a) That on its withdrawal the United Nations forces will be deployed—

That is the withdrawal of the Israeli force.—in Gaza and that the take over—

And I emphasize the words “take over”.—of Gaza from the military and civilian control of Israel will be exclusively by the United Nations emergency force.

(b) It is further Israel's expectation that the United Nations will be the agency to be utilized for carrying out the functions enumerated by the Secretary General, namely:—

They were enumerated in one of his earlier reports and he outlined them as follows:

“safeguarding life and property in the area by providing efficient and effective police protection; as will guarantee good civilian administration; as will assure maximum assistance to the United Nations refugee program; and as will protect and foster the economic development of the territory and its people”.

And then said Mrs. Meir:

(c) It is further Israel's expectation that the aforementioned responsibility of the United Nations in the administration of Gaza—

Not for the administration of Gaza but in the administration of Gaza.

—will be maintained for a transitory period from the takeover until there is a peace settlement, to be sought as rapidly as possible, or a definitive agreement on the future of the Gaza strip.

And she concluded by saying this:

It is the position of Israel—

And this is important in the context of the present situation.

—that if conditions are created in the Gaza strip which indicate a return to the conditions of deterioration which existed previously Israel would reserve its freedom to act to defend its rights.

These were the assumptions and expectations laid down by the government of Israel on the basis of which they withdrew, and withdrew very quickly, all their forces, civil and military, from the Gaza strip. When I say they withdrew very quickly I mean that they withdrew with great speed after the decision was made.

The Canadian position with regard to this statement of Mrs. Meir was that, as we understood them, her assumptions and expectations were reasonable. The United States position, as stated by Ambassador Lodge on March 1, is as follows:

. . . For the most part the declarations constitute, as we understand it, restatements of what has already been said by this assembly or by the