

In the closing paragraphs of his report, which are quoted in full below, the Secretary-General examined points in the General Assembly's resolutions on withdrawal which would still require attention after January 22. These were (a) the requirement that Israel should withdraw from the Gaza strip; (b) the usefulness of having both parties reaffirm their undertakings not only to desist from raids across the armistice demarcation lines but also to take active steps to prevent incursions; (c) the need for greater support by the parties for the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and the advantages of liaison between that body and UNEF when the latter reached the armistice line; (d) the question of Israel's withdrawal from Sharm al-Shaikh and the right of innocent passage for ships in the Gulf of Aqaba, and (e) the priority which must be given to withdrawal as the first essential phase in developing peaceful conditions. What the Secretary-General said was as follows:

In consequence of the intended withdrawal announced in the latest communication to the Secretary-General from the Government of Israel on 14 January, 1957, "the United Nations Emergency Force on 22 January will reach the armistice demarcation line wherever it follows the north-eastern boundary of the 'Sinai Desert'. At that stage the last two points in operative paragraph 2 of the resolution of 2 November will assume added importance.

One of these points is the request for full observance of the provisions of the armistice agreements. This request makes it clear that the withdrawal of Israel forces must be behind the armistice line as it has been established in the Egypt-Israel agreement. In this context it is to be noted, therefore, that the Israel communication is silent about withdrawal from the Gaza strip which, according to this armistice agreement, falls on the Egyptian side of the armistice demarcation line. Further discussions with the representatives of Israel are required on this point.

The other point which is mentioned together with the request for withdrawal refers to raids across the armistice demarcation lines into neighbouring territory. Such raids are prohibited also in the armistice agreements. The call for general observance of these agreements reinforces the specific request to the parties to desist from raids. The cease-fire assurances given to the Secretary-General by the parties in April and May, 1956 lent further legal solemnity to the relevant articles in the armistice agreements.

The Truce Supervision Organization established under the armistice agreements, as one of its main duties, assists in the prevention of incursions and raids. It is in accord with the call for scrupulous observance of the armistice agreements for the parties to take all appropriate measures to give UNTSO the support necessary to render it fully effective. It is a primary duty of the United Nations Emergency Force to supervise and enforce the cease-fire to which the parties committed themselves in response to the request of the General Assembly in the resolution of November 2. Appropriate liaison should be established between these two United Nations auxiliary organizations. Further consideration may have to be given to the question of the extent to which the Force might assume responsibilities so far carried by the Truce Supervision Organization.

The Secretary-General considers that, in view of the serious developments which have taken place, it would assist the two United Nations organs and facilitate compliance with this specific point in the resolution of 2 November, if the parties were formally to reconfirm their undertakings to desist from raids and to take active steps to prevent incursions. When