

What are the functions of this United Nations Emergency Force? Those functions and the task—and it is a very difficult task indeed which confronts the Force—have been laid down by resolutions of the General Assembly, and they are found also in the Secretary-General's second and final report, which has been approved by the Assembly. The basic resolution for these purposes is that which we adopted on 4-5 November (A/RES/394), which states that the function of this Force is "to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in accordance with all"—and I emphasize the word "all"—"the terms of the resolution of the General Assembly of 2 November 1956" (A/RES/390). In that latter resolution, as representatives will remember, provision is made for a cease-fire, for a prompt withdrawal of forces, and also—and this is no time to forget this provision—"that all Member States refrain from introducing military goods in the area of hostilities and in general refrain from any acts which would delay or prevent the implementation of the present resolution". And in paragraph 4 of that resolution we have this provision, namely, that, upon a cease-fire, steps are to be taken to reopen the Suez Canal and restore secure freedom of navigation.

Later, by resolution A/RES/395 of 7 November, the Assembly approved certain principles for the organization and functioning of the United Nations Emergency Force and those principles were stated in certain paragraphs of the Secretary-General's report (A/3302) which was attached to the resolution.

There is very strong, enthusiastic support in my country for this Force—but only as a United Nations Force, under United Nations control, and as an effective and organized Force which can do the job that has been given to it and which, if it can do that job, may be the beginning of something bigger and more permanent in the history of our Organization: something which we have talked about at United Nations meetings for many years, the organization of the peace through international action. Therefore, it is important that this Force should be so constituted and so organized that it will be able to do the work that it has been given to do and thereby set a precedent for the future.

It is also important that the principles on which the Force is to operate are sound. What are these principles? They have been laid down for us in the Secretary-General's report. The Force must be fully independent, in regard to its functions and its composition, of the political situation of any single member. The United Nations alone controls it and is responsible for it.

I agree, of course, that the Force—I am not talking about individual elements in the Force, but of the Force as such—in the circumstances and on the basis of which it was set up, could not operate in the territory of a country without the consent of that country. That is why we are happy that Egypt has given that consent in principle and I am sure that we all agree that, in giving that consent to the constructive and helpful move, no infringement of sovereignty is involved. It is rather an example of using national sovereignty to bring about peace and security and a political settlement through United Nations action.

The control, then, of this Force is in the hands of the United Nations and must remain there. Otherwise it would not be a United Nations Force but it would be merely a collection of national forces, each under the control of its own Government and serving in another country with the consent of and under conditions laid down by that country. That, I am sure, would be unacceptable to most of the Governments of this Assembly.

Having said that, however, I do agree that the Secretary-General should certainly consult with the Government of the country in which the Force is serving, on all matters of any importance that affect it; also, as we understand it, the Force is to remain in the area until its task is completed, and that would surely be for the determination of the United Nations itself. It operates, according to the principles as we understand them, where it is necessary to operate in order to accomplish its task, certainly between the opposing Powers to prevent conflict from recurring. As the Secretary-General has said in his report, its functions can be assumed to cover an area extending roughly from the Suez Canal to the armistice demarcation lines, and in that area to facilitate and aid the establishing and securing of peaceful conditions, as an indispensable prerequisite to a just and agreed political settlement.

Surely we must not for one moment lose sight of that objective. It seems to me that it is high time that we began the process of achieving it through United Nations action, because at best the achievement is going to be a long and difficult undertaking.