

Supply—External Affairs

As I said at that time, this was our government's understanding of the procedure which should be followed. It was not done on this occasion. I do not intend to be critical of the secretary general, because anyone who knows the circumstances under which he was operating at that time and the attitude taken by certain governments which had large contingents in the United Nations emergency force will appreciate the difficulties he was facing.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Chairman, may I ask the right hon. gentleman a question? Did the secretary general consult at least with the advisory committee? I understand he did at one meeting.

Mr. Pearson: Yes.

Mr. Lewis: But only at one meeting.

Mr. Pearson: Yes. He had one meeting of a committee of contributors. There was a second meeting, but that meeting of the advisory committee took place after the decision had been made by the secretary general to recall the emergency force.

Again, I should like to refer back to 1957 in the hope that this kind of situation will not be repeated in the future. I shall quote from a memorandum I made about a conversation I had with Mr. Hammarskjold on March 12, 1957. The secretary general's position—Mr. Hammarskjold—was that Egypt could not order UNEF to withdraw without renouncing the consent given to the original entry of the force. This could not be done unilaterally because that agreement was conditional on the functions which the force was performing in Egypt in accordance with assembly resolutions. Undoubtedly—and I am referring to the secretary general's conversation with me—in considering the question of withdrawal the assembly would be primarily concerned with whether UNEF had completed the functions which the assembly had given it. If the assembly decided that these functions had been fulfilled, it would recommend that UNEF be withdrawn. However, if the assembly decided that UNEF's functions were not fulfilled it would probably recommend that the force should not be withdrawn. Either way, however, the assembly could do no more than recommend. It could not give orders to Egypt.

That, of course, is the situation now in respect of the operation of any United Nations force on any foreign territory. It can only give orders when it acts under chapter VII of the United Nations charter which deals with action as a result of a security council resolution. We know what has happened in

this particular situation. UNEF was recalled. I think it is unfortunate that this happened. The Canadian contingent was recalled from UNEF in circumstances which were very unfortunate and unhappy indeed. They were recalled for reasons given to us by the United Nations secretary general who asked that we take such action in 48 hours. The reasons for this which he passed on and which had been sent to him by the government of the United Arab Republic were reasons which we did not accept. We let the government in Cairo know quite clearly that we did not accept them as valid in any way, shape or form.

A few weeks ago, when this crisis began, we were faced in the very beginning with the same old problem of ten years ago. We were faced with a statement of policy by the government of the United Arab Republic that passage through the gulf of Aqaba to Elath, the Israeli port, was to be denied and that, as well, UNEF was to be withdrawn. Well, we knew or should have known the significance of this. We had been warned ten years before in no uncertain terms as to the course Israel would take if that demand were made. They had said, and repeated a few weeks ago, that denial of free access through the gulf to their port would be considered by them as an act of aggression. They said that ten years ago, they repeated it a few weeks ago, and war broke out. The United Nations ordered a cease fire as they did in 1956. But, as in 1956, the problem remains, that is, the problem of dealing with the situations on the frontier and in the gulf and the ultimate problem of dealing with the relations between the state of Israel and its neighbours.

It is not enough to deal with these immediate situations. It is not enough to bring about a cease fire, important as that is. It is not enough even to stop the fighting, vital as that is. There are other problems which must be settled if the cease fire is to be effective in producing a peace settlement and peace. So we have the other problems which faced us in 1957 facing us again today. What about withdrawal of the forces from occupied territories, with or without guarantees? What about withdrawal of Israeli forces from Sharm el Sheik where they are now? They withdrew once before. They withdrew before on the very definite understanding and indeed, in so far as their bilateral relations with the United States are concerned, on the commitment that if they withdrew from Sharm el Sheik and other parts of the Sinai peninsula this would be done as part of a pledge which would