

as may be necessary to maintain a cease-fire situation. We also agree that before any withdrawal of UNEF from this position, the question should be referred to the Advisory Committee on UNEF, which, after all, is an agency of this Assembly.

What I am talking about is, again, the maintenance of peaceful conditions—not the solution of controversial questions, legal or political. There are similar considerations which govern our own attitude towards the situation in the Gaza strip.

We agree that arrangements for the withdrawal of Israel should be made between the Commander of UNEF and the Chief of Staff of the Israel armed forces, and, for that purpose, we welcome the announcement that a meeting between these officers has already been held. We also agree with the Secretary-General and with other delegations that, in view of the special problems and complexities of the Gaza area and in view of the long-standing major responsibilities of the United Nations there for the assistance of Arab refugees, special and helpful arrangements could be made, involving the United Nations and some of its subsidiary bodies, to facilitate an effective replacement of the present administration in the Gaza strip.

What we are suggesting now—and we assume that these things can and will be done on Israel's withdrawal without prejudging or prejudicing any legal position of Egypt under the Armistice Agreement, a legal position which we admit Egypt has—is, first, that UNEF should move into the Gaza strip immediately upon the withdrawal of Israel's armed forces and, secondly, that the United Nations should take immediate steps to associate itself with the replacement of the civil administration there, although obviously this replacement would have to be done by agreement and would have to be planned to avoid any breakdown in the administrative services which now exist.

Why should there be any suspicion about the United Nations taking its full share of responsibility for security, stability and development in the Gaza strip? Surely no sincere or unprejudiced person is going to allege that the United Nations Emergency Force, with its present composition and authority, is an agent or could become an agent of colonialism or imperialism—nor could this allegation be made about UNRWA or any other United Nations Agency in the area. United Nations action of this kind is a reward for nobody, but it means, I hope, greater assurance for everybody; that there will be security and stability there.

We think that these ideas, which have been covered by previous General Assembly resolutions or have been suggested in reports of the Secretary-General, should immediately on the withdrawal of Israel forces be converted into concrete arrangements and that the Secretary-General should take steps to that end, with our full support—and, if he later requires it, with our endorsement. It was the view of my own delegation—and I know that other delegations have shared this view—that the Secretary-General should be requested to do these things by a resolution of this Assembly. It is the view of others that the Secretary-General has the necessary authority under existing resolutions and reports. We accept that view and agree that, if there is goodwill and a desire to make firm and constructive arrangements on all sides, no difficulty should arise. We have, however, as we see it, an obligation—not so much to Israel, but to ourselves as Members of the United Nations—to see that, immediately after withdrawal, some action is taken on the lines indicated last Friday by the United States representative and today by many other representatives. If other delegations agree, as many have already agreed, that this should be done, then that should give us the necessary assurance not only that the United Nations has succeeded in bringing about a cease fire and a withdrawal of forces, but that the United Nations will also take constructive and effective action to avoid a resumption of hostilities. Only in this way, I suggest, can we create the kind of atmosphere without which there can be no progress in the direction of that peace which we so much desire.

We have made progress in the last few days towards that objective. Perhaps in a day or two we may have even greater reason for hope, if the Secretary-General could report to us on the completion of the withdrawal of Israel forces and on related matters. We have, then, made progress—encouraging progress—in the solution of this problem. But much remains to be done, and goodwill and understanding will have to be shown by all of us before we can be confident that a final result will be achieved which will bring peace and security to this troubled part of the world.