



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADA'S POSITION IN MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

Excerpts from a speech by Mr. L.B. Pearson,
Secretary of State for External Affairs, in
the House of Commons, March 15, 1957.

...This Middle East problem has been almost continuously before the United Nations Assembly since I spoke to this House on external affairs last November and that consideration by the United Nations I think has helped not only to bring the fighting to an end in that area but to prevent the conflict breaking out again or even worse spreading... The United Nations Assembly of course has its limitations as I have already shown and will try to show again in this discussion. There is no use asking it to do things it cannot do or for which it has no mandate under the Charter. Therefore there is no use blaming it if it does not do the impossible. It is also wrong, as I have said before, to use the United Nations as an excuse for national shortcomings and hesitations or as an escape from national responsibilities even though these should be discussed and when possible discharged through the United Nations.

The United Nations is no substitute for wise national policy or for close co-operation between friends and allies. It supplements, and essentially supplements, but it cannot replace these necessities. There is no particular value therefore in saying, "Let the United Nations do it", unless we accept the obligation to do our best to make that possible by wise national decisions inside and outside the United Nations.

Background of the Crisis

Mr. Speaker, before dealing with some of the details of this problem I would like for a moment to endeavour to put it in perspective.

The problem we have been discussing and trying to solve in New York is merely one aspect of the whole problem of the Middle East. That general problem would be with us if there never had been any trouble over the Suez or over Palestine last October. It comes from the rise of nationalism in the Middle East

and from what seems at times to be a morbid preoccupation and suspicion of the people in that area, a suspicion they have of the people who once ruled them; it comes also from the impatience of these people in the Middle East to convert political freedom into economic and social progress and more fundamentally it comes from the pressure especially in Egypt of a rapidly growing population on the productive resources of the country which cannot keep pace with that increased population.

There is also, and we are now getting closer to the immediate difficulties, the bitter and at times seemingly insoluble problem of the relations between Israel and her Arab neighbours which came to a head in the explosion of last October.

Since that time the United Nations has brought about a cease-fire and has established an agency for securing and supervising that cease-fire. How that was done was discussed in the House last November. Since that time the United Nations has been considering the withdrawal of Israel from Egypt. There has been agreement from the beginning in New York with this withdrawal in principle; but it has been difficult to convert that agreement in principle into one of practice, whether the agreement should be unconditional or whether it should be conditional.

The House will remember that after the withdrawal of United Kingdom and French forces from Port Said last December the forces of Israel also withdrew from all Egypt or Egyptian administered territories except the points Sharm al-Shaikh on the Straits of Tiran and the Gaza strip. Israel for some time was unable to withdraw her forces from those two places without assurances, first, about navigation in the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba and, second, that Gaza was not to be returned to a situation where it could be used as it had been used previously as a base for attack on Israel.

Egypt and the other Arab and a great many Asian states refused to consider at the Assembly any arrangement on these matters, or even at times to discuss them, until a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces had been effected. They refused to agree that the United Nations Emergency Force could be used in any sense as an occupation force. In particular India and Yugoslavia, which were supplying strong and effective contingents to this force, held strong views on that point - and their views are important. The Arab-Asian group also refused to accept at the United Nations Assembly any change in the armistice arrangements of some years ago between Egypt and Israel concerning the Gaza strip while permitting Israel to benefit from other provisions of those armistice arrangements. As for the Gulf of Aqaba and the Straits of Tiran the Arab-Asian group, or most of them, felt that freedom of navigation there would depend on the legal status of the Gulf and the Straits, the waters of which some of them considered to be not international but territorial.

Those two positions were far apart and it would have been difficult for the United Nations to reconcile them even if there had been a maximum of good will or mutual understanding between the conflicting sides, and it is an understatement to say that there was no such good will.

The Canadian Position

The Canadian position has, I think, been consistent from the beginning. From our very first statement at the United Nations Assembly last November we took the position then and we have maintained it since that the withdrawal of Israeli forces and arrangements following that withdrawal were related and that one could not be discussed or decided without taking into consideration the other.

For us it was not a question of rewarding Israel for something she might have done by force last October; it was not a question of allowing her to lay down formal conditions governing her withdrawal. It was a question of whether we should not take action in our own interest, and in the interest of the United Nations and of peace, to see that the former conditions in that area -- conditions of fear, insecurity and conflict -- were not restored.

Our Delegation preferred a single resolution to bring this about, with provisions, first, for withdrawal and, later in the same resolution, for arrangements to follow withdrawal. We were trying to do that, to draft a programme, and a resolution based on that programme which in our opinion would have been fair to both sides, but we were told it would not be possible to secure the necessary two-thirds majority of the Assembly for any such resolution. The United States was particularly hesitant about the prospects of securing agreement with regard to a resolution of that kind, and we were warned that if we put forward such a resolution, and it failed to secure two-thirds of the votes of the Assembly, the net result would be bad. We did not entirely accept that position, but we did agree that there was no possibility of securing a two-thirds majority for a resolution of that nature if the United States did not actively support it. And in the result, as hon. members know, on February 2 a second resolution, short and not too specific, was passed on arrangements to follow withdrawal.

Israel hesitated to withdraw her forces from Sharm al-Shaikh and the Gaza strip on these vague and somewhat ambiguous assurances 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-Abyssinian conflict, that 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 negotiations which we thought were 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.

Israel's "Assumptions and Expectations"

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 programme; 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 take-over until there is a peace settlement, to be sought as rapidly as possible, or a definitive agreement in 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 Secretary-General in his reports, of hopes and expectations which seem to us not unreasonable in the light of the prior actions of this Assembly.

This statement of Mr. Lodge was followed by an extremely important communication of March 2 from President Eisenhower to the Prime Minister of Israel which may have been decisive in bringing about the withdrawal. I quote from that letter of President Eisenhower as follows:

It has always been the view of this Government --

That is the Government of the United States.

--that after the withdrawal there should be a united effort by all of the nations to bring about conditions in the area --

That is the Gaza area.

--more stable, more tranquil and more conducive to the general welfare than those which existed heretofore.

Hopes and expectations based thereon were voiced by your foreign minister and others.

Then said President Eisenhower:

I believe that it is reasonable to entertain such hopes and expectations and I want you to know that the United States, as a friend of all of the countries of the area and as a loyal member of the United Nations, will seek that such hopes prove not to be in vain.

That is from President Eisenhower's letter of March 2. Mr. Speaker, those are the views as to what should be done. But the terrific responsibility of putting those views into action has been placed largely on the shoulders of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It is therefore important to try to understand what authority, under the resolutions that we have accepted, the Secretary-General has for that purpose because very much indeed is left to him. We therefore are obliged to fall back on that resolution of February 2 which I have mentioned and leave it to the Secretary-General to interpret that resolution and to implement arrangements based on it. That is going to be difficult for him to do. But if any man can do it, I think it is the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who is a man of devotion, integrity,

amazing industry and diplomatic skill and fair mindedness. However, Mr. Speaker, this is not, I admit, too satisfactory a procedure though it may be the best possible that the United Nations Assembly was able to obtain having regard to the fact that a two-thirds majority of the Assembly must be achieved for any resolution.

Responsibilities of the UN

Let us then go back and see what are the responsibilities of the United Nations which the Secretary-General is now to do his best to make effective; and I believe he is leaving tomorrow for the Middle East for that purpose. We stated in this House these responsibilities or these functions as laid down by the General Assembly resolutions, on November 27, beginning I think at page 61 of Hansard. We then pointed out in this House that these responsibilities were laid down or outlined in the Secretary-General's report of November 4, which is the guiding document in this matter, especially paragraph 12 of that report. That report can be found on page 13 of the White Paper dealing with the story of the Middle East already tabled in this House. Paragraph 12, the important paragraph of that report which contains the basic terms of reference for the Secretary-General with regard to United Nations responsibility and particularly the functions of the United Nations Emergency Force, reads as follows:

. . . The functions of the United Nations Force would be, when a cease-fire is being established, to enter Egyptian territory with the consent of the Egyptian Government, in order to help maintain quiet during and after the withdrawal of non-Egyptian troops, and to secure compliance with the other terms established in the resolution of November 2, 1956.

It is therefore important to remember what were those other terms of the resolution of November 2. They were also given to the House by me in my statement on November 27 and 29 and they are also quoted on page 8 of the White Paper. This resolution of November 2, which is basic in this connection -- and it will be recalled that we were criticized by the Official Opposition for not voting against this resolution -- includes the following provisions which should be recalled:

1. Urges as a matter of priority that all parties now involved in hostilities in the area agree to an immediate cease-fire and as part thereof halt the movement of military forces and arms into the area;
2. Urges the parties to the armistice agreements promptly to withdraw all forces behind the armistice lines into neighbouring territory, and to observe scrupulously the provisions of the armistice agreements;

3. Recommends that all members 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 this resolution;--

And finally:

--4. Urges that upon the cease-fire being effective steps be taken to reopen the Suez Canal and restore secure freedom of navigation; . . .

These functions as outlined by the Secretary-General in his report and based on the resolution of November 2 were approved by a resolution of the General Assembly of November 7; and that resolution reaffirms the necessity for a scrupulous observance of the Israeli-Egyptian armistice terms. That reaffirmation was given again by the Assembly in a resolution on February 2, passed by a vote of 56 to nothing, including the votes of the United Kingdom and the United States. This resolution of February 2, this reaffirmation of the scrupulous observance of the armistice terms, also included provisions that the United Nations Emergency Force was to be deployed on the Egyptian-Israeli demarcation line, and for the implementation of other measures included in the Secretary-General's report of a few weeks before, January 24, I think.

This report of January 24 by the Secretary-General, which was endorsed unanimously by the General Assembly and is binding on the Secretary-General because of that unanimous endorsement including the votes of the United Kingdom and the United States, emphasizes that there can be no change in the legal situation under the armistice agreement until the parties to that agreement accept such a change. This report states also that the General Assembly can only recommend; it cannot establish any United Nations administration of Gaza, and that that recommendation, to be effective, would require negotiations with Egypt. Now, there have been no further resolutions laying down the function to be performed by the Secretary-General in carrying out the earlier resolutions. Therefore, this one of February 2 is decisive in this connection.

Our own position in regard to this matter was made clear on February 26. At that time we took the position that an arrangement to follow the withdrawal of the Israeli forces should be spelled out in a resolution and not merely deduced from the Secretary-General's reports. We put out in considerable detail what we thought should be included in any such plan or resolution. It should include, first, observance of the armistice; second, deployment of United Nations Emergency Force in Gaza on both sides of the armistice line; third, there should be no interference with innocent passage through the Straits of Tiran pending determination of the legal position of those waters; fourth, we made certain proposals for Gaza. This is such an important point on the map at present that I should like to go into that matter,

Mr. Speaker, in somewhat more detail in elaborating the proposals we made at the Assembly. It will, I think, if I can go into it in detail, remove some of the misconceptions about this particular problem.

The Problem of Gaza

Legally, as I have stated, responsibility for the civil administration of Gaza, under the Egyptian-Israeli Armistice Agreement of 1949, lies with Egypt. However, in planning for the restoration of civil administration following the withdrawal of Israel forces from the area, we stated our views to the General Assembly at that time -- this view was shared by a great many other delegations and indeed I think by the Secretary-General himself -- that there were important practical considerations which qualified or should qualify this legal position. We have an extremely explosive situation in a small and crowded area where there are about 300,000 people, and perhaps 260,000 of them are refugees. It should be recognized, we thought, that this situation might very easily get out of control, and accordingly we considered -- this was also the feeling of other members of the Assembly -- that the United Nations should accept, and Egypt should agree to the acceptance of, responsibility to the maximum possible extent for establishing and maintaining effective civil administration of the Gaza strip. This arrangement, of course, would have to be without prejudice to the legal rights of Egypt in the territory under the armistice agreement, and would be provisional, pending final agreement on the proper disposition of Gaza which has never, since the creation of the State of Israel, belonged to the sovereign territory of any state.

The words we used in the Assembly in putting forward this programme are on the record, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps I could quote one paragraph from our statement. On February 26 I said at the Assembly:

After Israel's withdrawal, the United Nations should, in our view and by agreement with Egypt, accept responsibility to the maximum possible extent for establishing and maintaining effective civil administration in the territory; in fostering economic development and social welfare, in maintaining law and order. The United Nations Relief and Works Administration is already there, with an experienced and efficient administrative nucleus. The United Nations could also provide other help through United Nations technical assistance machinery, the resources of its secretariat, and expert consultants recruited for special purposes. In this way there would be built up in Gaza, in co-operation with Egypt and with Israel, a United Nations civil administration.

We had a resolution drafted which would have put that programme before the Assembly but we did not attempt to bring it forward because, as I have indicated, there was a feeling on

the part of certain delegations that it would not get the necessary two-thirds majority.

It is my view, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that this view will prove to be well-founded, that we have now entered a phase in which progress may be made towards the objective of finding a suitable balance between the practical position of the United Nations and the legal position of Egypt in the administration of Gaza, an objective which was sought but never found at the recent session of the General Assembly. As I have said, the Secretary-General himself is going to the area tomorrow in search of such an understanding. It is a mission of great responsibility and delicacy, fraught with consequences for the peace of that area. So far as the Canadian Government is concerned, and I am sure so far as this House is concerned, we would not wish to do anything to complicate the Secretary-General's task by anything we might say here. I wish to reiterate, however, that our opinion is that, subject to the legal right of Egypt under the armistice agreement, and until those rights are altered, the United Nations and the United Nations Emergency Force have an important, indeed an essential role to play in the administration of that area.

Any policy or any action or any arrangement whereby the United Nations was refused Egyptian co-operation in the discharge of that role or in which the United Nations was denied a substantive responsibility for carrying out the purpose of ensuring peace and security in the Gaza Strip, any arrangement of that kind which included non-co-operation on the part of the single government most concerned, the Government of Egypt, would be doomed to failure.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Does the Government of Canada recognize the sovereignty of Egypt over the Gaza strip?

Mr. Pearson: No, Mr. Speaker, I have already stated that no single power has sovereignty over the Gaza strip. Under the armistice arrangement between Egypt and Israel, which was endorsed by the United Nations, the responsibility for the civil administration of that strip was placed in Egypt's hands and that is where it is now legally, under the armistice agreement which has been endorsed unanimously by the recent Assembly of the United Nations. Any effort, however, on any government's part to interfere with the practical necessity of United Nations action in the Gaza strip at the present time would, I think, be inconsistent with the basis of free co-operation which must underlie the discharge of United Nations responsibility in that area. It would deny to the area, and indeed to the people of both Egypt and Israel, the great practical benefits which could develop if the United Nations and its agencies were given a fair chance to make their contribution to the welfare and security of that unsettled region.

Egypt and UNEF

This situation, Mr. Speaker, in the Gaza strip points up, I think, the importance of a clear understanding of the relationship between Egypt and the United Nations Emergency Force.

and I should like to say a few words about that.

There have been a good many questions in this House. It is true, I dealt with this matter at some length in the House on November 27, and I also referred to it in the White Paper, at page 13, which I have mentioned.

We have from the very beginning, from the first statement of the Canadian delegate in New York on November 7, underlined the difficulties as well as the importance of this first United Nations Emergency Force. There is great hope in it for the future if it succeeds on this occasion, but it is an experiment and new ground, hard ground at times, is being broken. We have no illusions, and have had no illusions about the problems it would encounter. Cynicism has been expressed by some members in this House about this Force and there have been jibes from some quarters in this House about the nature of Canadian participation in the Force. But whatever the future may hold for this Force, I think it is fair to say that the United Nations Emergency Force has already performed an absolutely indispensable role in securing and supervising the cease-fire, in preventing a recurrence of conflict or the spreading of that conflict when it began.

Some weeks ago, General Burns wrote me a personal letter from his headquarters acknowledging a further contingent of supporting units that were going forward from Canada for the United Nations Emergency Force. In that letter he stated that the Canadians already in the force had made "all the difference in the world in the efficient operation of the administrative side of the military effort." He added that he "just could not have done without them." He also said, Mr. Speaker, that the R.C.A.F. element in his Force had worked long hours in arduous conditions and deserved very great credit for its efficiency and devotion to duty.

There has been some argument about the status of this Force. The Government from the outset has accepted the guiding principle, included in the Secretary-General's report of last November, and specifically endorsed by the General Assembly, that the United Nations Assembly could not request the Force to be stationed or operate on the territory of a given country without the consent of the government of that country. The rights of sovereignty of the country in the circumstances under discussion could not be infringed upon by other states, even acting through the United Nations Assembly, which has no power in fact so to infringe in contrast with the Security Council, when actions are being taken by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Mr. Nesbitt: Is this resolution not based on the "Uniting for Peace" Resolution, part A?

Mr. Pearson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, all of our action in the United Nations Assembly at the special emergency session dealing with this Middle East crisis was based on the "Uniting for Peace"

Resolution of 1950, which gave the Assembly certain functions, and indeed duties in case of deadlock in the Security Council; but while that is true, it does not alter the fact that under the Charter of the United Nations the Assembly can do nothing but make recommendations which have to be carried out by the member states after those recommendations have received two-thirds support in the Assembly.

Last November 5, Mr. Speaker -- and this is important in qualifying what I have just said -- the Egyptian Government formally conveyed to the Secretary-General explicit acceptance of the General Assembly resolution of that date, which established the United Nations Force to perform the tasks which I have already outlined. Egypt's acceptance of this resolution was a voluntary act, by which the Egyptian Government imposed on itself a qualification upon the exercise of its sovereignty.

This decision was formally conveyed in an aide-mémoire on the basis for the presence and functioning of UNEF in Egypt, an aide-mémoire submitted to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General in his report on November 20, and subsequently noted with approval by the Assembly. In this aide-mémoire, which is also in the White Paper to which I referred, I think on page 20, and therefore before the House for some weeks, the terms of which had been agreed between the Secretary-General and the Egyptian Government, the Government of Egypt declared:

When exercising its sovereign rights on any matter concerning the presence and functioning of UNEF, it will be guided, in good faith, by its acceptance of the general resolution of November 5, 1956.

This is a quotation from the Egyptian communication. And that declaration was balanced in the aide-mémoire by a declaration on the part of the United Nations, through the Secretary-General, and I quote, that "the activities of UNEF will be guided, in good faith, by the task established for the force" in the resolution of the General Assembly, and that -- again I quote -- "in particular, the United Nations, understanding this to correspond to the wishes of the Government of Egypt reaffirms its willingness to maintain the UNEF until its task is completed."

This, then, Mr. Speaker, is the nature of Egypt's consent to the presence and functioning of the United Nations Emergency Force on Egyptian territory. There has been no infringement on the sovereignty of the Government of Egypt by the action of any other government or governments. But in the arrangements made and in the agreement which I have referred to, the United Nations, which established this Force to do certain tasks, clearly has a right to be consulted as to whether and when these tasks have been discharged, as it would if they were to be extended. From this, it follows in our view, and this is the view of the Secretary-General also, that if Egypt should at any time make a request for UNEF's withdrawal, the appropriate procedure would be for that request to go first to the Advisory

Committee on UNEF through the Secretary-General. There it would be discussed by the Committee which was set up for that purpose by the Assembly, and if necessary and desirable the whole matter could then be referred to the full Assembly for decision. And therefore any question of whether UNEF should be withdrawn would become a matter for discussion with and decision by the United Nations. This is this Government's understanding of the procedure which should be followed.

Having said that, however, I should add that if Egypt refused to accept the United Nations view that UNEF's task was still unfinished, and that UNEF should not be withdrawn, Egypt would, in our view, be nullifying its acceptance of the Assembly's basic resolution establishing the Force and laying down its function.

Nevertheless, the Assembly does not have any authority under the Charter of the United Nations to create binding legal obligations on member states, and Egypt, therefore, could not, in the last resort, be compelled by the United Nations Assembly to continue to accept any resolution or to co-operate in carrying it out. The Assembly cannot force its view on any state although in certain contingencies the Security Council can attempt to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian position on this matter has already been stated to the General Assembly, to the Advisory Committee, on more than one occasion and was given to the House on November 27. In case there is any doubt as to what our position is on this matter I will have another opportunity to state it to the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee either late tonight or tomorrow morning before the Secretary-General leaves for Egypt. These statements which we have already made of our general position should make clear that this is the stand we are taking and will take in respect of the reinforcements from Canada to UNEF which have recently gone forward. Although I know I am taking up a great deal of the time of the House perhaps I should go into the question of this request for reinforcements which was made some weeks ago, because it is a matter of interest to the House.

Reinforcements for UNEF

The first mention of a reconnaissance squadron for UNEF was on December 4 when our Ambassador in Cairo reported that General Burns was sending a message to the Secretary-General making proposals relating to the Canadian contribution to UNEF. We were told then only that General Burns would find it desirable to have as a combined unit an additional armoured reconnaissance unit or squadron of company size of about 200 men.

Shortly afterwards our Permanent Mission in New York reported that a representative of the Secretary-General had informed them that General Burns had urged that a request for a reconnaissance unit from Canada be pursued, that the reconnaissance

squadron was urgently needed to supplement the two mechanized companies from Yugoslavia and would be deployed in Sinai. In the second week of December the Canadian Permanent Mission in New York received a letter from the United Nations formally requesting this additional contribution of the reconnaissance unit to UNEF.

There have been a great many reports of Egyptian objections to the arrival of these Canadian reinforcements. The reports and rumours of these objections will, I feel confident, prove entirely unfounded. I have every hope based on the assurances we have received as recently as the last 24 hours that the Canadian reinforcements will join UNEF in Egypt for duty in the normal way, as indeed I indicated would be the case, I think on March 7, in this House. No interference in this move by any government could be accepted by us as valid and if any attempt to so interfere were successful this would have serious results so far as any further Canadian participation in UNEF is concerned, and therefore it would have serious results for UNEF as a whole. There should be no doubt about this in anyone's mind, but it is a contingency which as I have said I have every reason to believe will not arise based on assurances which have been received.

In taking this position, which I think is a reasonable one, we are concerned about the whole future not only of this particular Force but of the United Nations itself as an agency to facilitate and increase international peace and security. I am sure all of us have nothing but good will for the Egyptian people; we are not participating in any manoeuvres of any kind against them; we are not influenced by anything but a desire to make the United Nations and its agency the United Nations Emergency Force effective for achieving the objectives of the Assembly, the objectives of securing and supervising a cease-fire and facilitating the establishment of peaceful conditions. In the policy we have been following at the United Nations in these matters our motives are above reproach. Any imputation to the contrary is false and unfair. UNEF is no cloak and will be no cloak for the plans or ambitions of any state or states, and there is no foundation whatever for any suspicions from any source that anyone wishes to use it in that way.

Suez Canal

Mr. Speaker, questions have also been asked about the progress of the clearance of the Suez Canal and I should therefore say something about that. While our attention has been concentrated for several weeks past on efforts to arrange for completion of the withdrawal of Israeli forces and on UNEF this other major enterprise, the clearing of the Suez Canal, has been going forward. The clearing of the Suez Canal under United Nations supervision has been proceeding in accordance with the most optimistic time estimates of the technical officers responsible for its progress. We do not know yet exactly when the resumption of a full flow of traffic will be possible but we are informed that if the present rate of progress is maintained a channel capable of taking ships

of more than 25 feet draught will be opened very shortly, in a matter of days. We are told also that the clearing of marginal obstacles and restoration of full navigational facilities has made much better progress than had been originally scheduled, in spite of political difficulties which have understandably attracted so much attention.

As the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) told the House last Monday, Canada has acquired a special interest in the steps being taken to reopen the Canal by virtue of the advance -- not the gift but the advance on good 'security' -- that the Government has made toward the financing of the United Nations clearing operations.

Canada, of course, is not a large user of the Canal but we are naturally anxious, as a trading nation, for the earliest possible resumption of the Suez traffic which is so vital to the economies of the many user states. Our participation in the advances made to the United Nations and the work that this interim financing has made possible was also of particular assistance to the United Kingdom and France at that time, and that was the main reason why we participated in that interim financing; and that is a reason which presumably should commend itself to hon. members opposite.

As hon. members know, certain proposals for provisional operating arrangements for the Canal pending the working out of a permanent regime have been agreed upon between the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, France and Norway and these proposals have been passed on to the Government of Egypt through the Secretary-General. They are to the effect that the International Bank or the United Nations itself should act as a neutral agent for receiving Canal tolls of which 50 per cent should be paid to Egypt immediately and the balance held pending determination of its disbursement under a definitive Suez settlement.

As far as I know, the Egyptian Government has not yet given its reply to these proposals but the Secretary-General is in touch with them on the matter and I have no doubt that is one of the questions he will be discussing on his visit to Cairo.

While Canada of course was not involved in the discussions which led up to the formulation of the proposals now before the Government of Egypt, I may say we consider that these proposals are sound and offer a reasonable basis for agreed arrangements under which regular Canal traffic might be resumed, and we hope that early agreement on such arrangements will be possible. The importance of that to us all is obvious. The arrangements that were agreed to last October at the Security Council provide for the free and non-discriminatory and secure transit through the Suez Canal for ships of all states, and in all states I include the State of Israel. We indicated our support for those arrangements in this House last summer.

From what I have said I think it will be clear that our general policy on these matters at the United Nations and elsewhere has been based on the negotiation of differences. Success in such negotiation is not of course possible if through timidity we give in to unwarranted pressures, but on the other hand it is not assisted by abuse of or hissing at any of the governments or personages involved with whom we have to negotiate. Such abuse is an easy escape for emotions, but it hinders rather than helps the search for acceptable solutions which will avoid the use of force. Indeed it often helps to make force unavoidable by provoking wild and angry reactions. Nor is the use of violent language necessarily an indication of either strength or conviction on the part of the person who uses that language.

To state, as has been done, that this Government has said anything or has done anything which would condone the use of force in this or any other matter unless that force is justified as self-defence, individual or collective, under the Charter of the United Nations, is a misrepresentation of our position and is denied by every act and every statement on the record of the United Nations or elsewhere. To attempt to explain some alleged and imaginary change in Canada's attitude toward the use of force in the Middle East by tying that fictitious change to the new Eisenhower doctrine for United States policy in the Middle East is a misrepresentation not only of Canadian policy but of the Eisenhower doctrine itself.

The Eisenhower Doctrine

It has been stated ... that the United States policy to which I have referred is, and I quote ...

If there should be communist aggression in the Near East, American troops -- acting on their own -- would intervene.

That is the end of the quotation. That is also a distortion of the meaning of the Eisenhower doctrine and it does no good to co-operation between friends or to the effort to avoid conflict... (The pertinent paragraph of) the Congressional resolution on the subject ... is as follows:

The United States regards as vital to the national interest and world peace the preservation of the independence and integrity of the nations of the Middle East. To this end, if the President determines the necessity thereof, the United States is prepared to use armed forces to assist any such nation or group of such nations requesting assistance against armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism: provided that such employment shall be consonant with the treaty obligations of the United States and with the constitution of the United States.

That is a paragraph from the resolution. How will the President of the United States determine this necessity? What measures will he put into operation after the determination is made, and how will he do it? Well, the President has already made himself perfectly clear on this point, and I commend his statement to hon. members opposite. Here is his statement to Congress when he submitted his resolution:

These measures would have to be consonant with the treaty obligations of the United States, including the Charter of the United Nations and with any action or recommendations of the United Nations. They would also, if armed attack occurred, be subject to the overriding authority of the United Nations Security Council in accordance with the Charter.

To say that that doctrine, as stated by the President and accepted by Congress, would justify unilateral action by the United States in the Middle East ... is not a correct interpretation of the United States doctrine. It may have its weaknesses, but that is certainly not one of them. That is one charge, that we have abandoned our earlier position because of an alleged new United States doctrine. This criticism is of course linked with the more general allegation ... that at the United Nations and elsewhere we have been the chore boy, the satellite, the follower or whatever you wish to call it, of the United States. Well, the record can speak for itself and it is far more impressive as evidence than any gibes can be ...

Mr. Speaker, in closing I would just like to say that since last October we have done what we could to secure a peaceful, honourable settlement of immediate issues which would pave the way for the solution of the political problems between Israel and her neighbours -- a solution which is essential if further conflict is to be avoided, and which seems so terribly difficult to achieve, unless, of course, one has no direct contact with the problems themselves. At the present moment, as I see it, the essential thing is that both Israel and Egypt should exercise restraint and moderation, and that Egypt should co-operate and not obstruct the United Nations in its efforts to secure and supervise peace and order in the Gaza strip. That is the immediate point of crisis.

Therefore, the Government of Egypt is, I think, in honour bound to co-operate ... with the United Nations in this task. It is to its own interest to do that ... to co-operate with the United Nations in this task. That co-operation is essential because the United Nations is operating in a territory in Gaza which legally is under the administration of the Government of Egypt ...

If the Government of Egypt does not so co-operate, then it may prevent the United Nations not only from taking on new responsibilities for peace and security but from discharging those which the United Nations has already taken on in respect of

250,000 refugees dependent entirely on the United Nations and those which it has already taken on in respect of security at the demarcation line. From every point of view, therefore, the Government of Egypt should in its own interest as well as in the interest of peace and security give the maximum amount of co-operation to the United Nations in this effort. If it does not do so, I repeat, its action could result in the dissolution of the United Nations Emergency Force entirely and even in the dissolution of the United Nations Relief Works Agency in Gaza, and that would mean chaos. It could result in the Israeli and Egyptian armies facing each other once again in bitterness and hostility, with nothing between them.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that Egypt -- even Egypt, let alone any other country -- desires that result. I therefore hope that those powers which have the greatest influence -- and I am thinking particularly of the United States -- will use that influence forcefully through diplomatic channels and any other channels which may be open to them in Cairo and wherever else is necessary, to help avoid such a disaster. So far as this Government is concerned, we will continue to do our best in helping to find a peaceful and just solution for these dangerous and difficult problems.

S/C