



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Statement by the Hon. L.B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada and Chairman of the Delegation, in the Plenary Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, January 18, 1957.

The Assembly has before it a statement of the factual situation regarding the withdrawal of Israeli forces (Document A/3500 of January 15), which withdrawal is now well on the way to completion.

We have also before us a resolution (A/3501/Rev 1 of January 17), which reaffirms previous resolutions concerning withdrawal. This resolution is moderate in character and unprovocative in tone and our Delegation will support it. It notes with regret and concern the failure of Israel to comply with the terms of the earlier resolutions passed in the Assembly on this subject. It requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to secure the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces and to report on the matter to the General Assembly within five days. The words of the resolution are quite clear in this regard.

We share with other delegations the regret that a situation has arisen in which compliance with the earlier resolution on withdrawal has not yet been completed.

But we would also regret and be concerned about a withdrawal merely to the old state of affairs. We recall at this time that the earlier resolutions--in accordance with the terms of which Israeli forces are to withdraw--dealt with matters other than territorial withdrawal, but matters which are related to this essential step.

Therefore I hope the Secretary-General, in his efforts which we support to bring about compliance regarding withdrawal will, in the further reports which he is to make to us, give consideration to ways and means of securing and stabilizing through United Nations action the situation after the withdrawal has taken place and pending a political settlement which alone can establish real and lasting peace and

security in the area. Surely there must be no return to the conditions, if we can avoid it, which helped to provoke the initial military action. That has been the position of our Delegation from the very beginning of the Assembly's consideration of this grave question.

I said on the night of November 1-2:

"The armed forces of Israel and of Egypt are to return to the Armistice lines, where presumably ... they will once again face each other in fear and hatred ... What then, six months from now? Are we to return merely to the status quo ante? Such a return would not be to a position of security, ... but would be a return to terror, blood-shed, strife, incidents, charges and counter-charges, and ultimately another explosion."

That remains our feeling on this matter. This feeling has also been reflected in resolutions on this subject which the Assembly has already passed and which Canada has supported.

It is an essential part of our work, then, not only to bring about a military withdrawal, but also to do what we can to avoid the restoration of a situation of disturbance, unrest and incidents which might require the United Nations to intervene all over again in the future in order to stop new fighting. The Secretary-General's report recognizes this danger. It refers to the resolution of November 2 which states the obligations of the parties to withdraw but which requires them also "to desist from raids across the armistice lines and observe scrupulously the provisions of the Armistice Agreements". It refers also to the resolution of November 4, which goes beyond mere withdrawal.

Furthermore, as the Secretary-General states, certain of those related aspects of compliance will assume added importance once the military withdrawal is effected. Even now, however, we cannot, I suggest, ignore these related aspects in dealing with this question. Therefore, in asking the Secretary-General to report back, it is my hope that he will report on those other matters with suggestions to the Assembly on what can and should be done.

The Secretary-General has already indicated that study might be given to the "question of the extent to which UNEF might assume responsibilities so far carried out by the Truce Supervision Organization". That truce organization certainly has not itself the power or authority effectively to interpose itself between the forces of the two conflicting parties. The UNEF, however, would now be effective for this purpose and, following closely the Israeli forces, could be deployed in the area of the demarcation line from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Aqaba, where it would function in order to prevent incidents, to keep the peace, and to make "secure"

the cessation of hostilities that has already been brought about by United Nations action. In so doing it would facilitate the compliance of the parties concerned with other relevant U.N. recommendations which have been or may be passed.

The Secretary-General notes that the withdrawal of the Israeli forces has not yet extended to those forces in the Gaza Strip. There, as we know, the situation regarding territorial sovereignty, density of population, and refugees differs from that in the areas of Egypt from which withdrawal has taken place.

Perhaps in his next report the Secretary-General might also indicate his views as to how the United Nations might assist in stabilizing this area and ensuring that it will not be used as a base for attacks and incidents, or as a target for retaliation. In this way also United Nations action might help to prevent a recurrence of hostilities.

The Secretary-General has also raised the question of "international significance of the Gulf of Aqaba, which he thinks "may be considered to justify the right of innocent passage from the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf, in accordance with recognized rules of international law". The uncertainty of the situation here and the unrest and fears arising from it have been and remain very disturbing factors. Therefore, this situation should, I think, also be considered by the Assembly and action taken to avoid trouble in the future. The withdrawal of Israeli forces from Sharm al Shaikh, which is a strategic and important position for controlling the Straits leading to the Gulf of Aqaba and navigation through them, might be followed by the posting of observers from UNEF at that point to assist in securing the peace and keeping navigation open, pending the determination of the legal and other issues involved.

In short, our view is that this Assembly, in its efforts to achieve complete withdrawal of Israeli military forces behind the demarcation line, as a matter of priority, has also an obligation to deal urgently and immediately with these other matters. The Secretary-General points out in his report that there is such an obligation.

"The Assembly, in taking this position, in no way disregarded all the other aims which must be achieved in order to create more satisfactory conditions than those prevailing during the period preceding the crisis. Some of these aims were mentioned by the Assembly. Others are to be found in previous decisions of the United Nations. All of them call for urgent attention. The basic function of the United Nations Emergency Force, "to help maintain quiet", gives the Force great value as a background for efforts toward resolving such pending problems, although it is not in itself a means to that end.

"It is essential that, through prompt conclusion of the first phases of implementation of the General Assembly resolutions, Member Governments should now be enabled to turn to the constructive tasks to which the establishment and the maintenance of the cease-fire, a full withdrawal of forces behind the armistice lines, a desisting from raids and scrupulous observance of the armistice agreements, should open the way."

The cease-fire that has been achieved and the withdrawal of the forces which is being achieved, will have opened the way to the attainment of these other indispensable objectives. Therefore, I hope that the Secretary-General in his report next week will give the Assembly his views on how we might take advantage here of the opportunity that is being afforded us. Our hope is that these various moves will bring about some security and relief from tension in the areas concerned. Such improvement is required not only to prevent a further armed conflict, but in order to create conditions and the atmosphere which is so essential if an enduring, honourable and peaceful settlement is to be achieved.

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