

the parties directly concerned with the Suez conflict consented to the stationing and functioning of the force in the area.

There were many anxious days in the long weeks from November 1956 to March 1957, when the withdrawal from Egyptian territory was completed and the United Nations force was fully deployed. There was noisy and acrimonious debate. There was also quiet and earnest consultation. At times it looked as though the UNEF experiment might fail, mainly because of political objections but also because of practical difficulties of establishing, organizing and directing an international force which was the first of its kind in history.

A major question for Canada was the nature of its own participation. Our experience was revealing. To support our political initiative in the Assembly, the Government offered to provide a self-contained infantry battalion group. But after these troops had begun to move to the port of embarkation, it emerged that, of some two dozen offers of military assistance to the United Nations, most were infantry units and practically none included the supporting and technical services which the force would need - including an air component. Since the great powers were not participating in the force, Canada was one of a very few countries which was able, because of its military know-how and experience, to provide administrative and logistic specialists. In the end, the Canadian contingent included reconnaissance, transport, maintenance and supply units of the Canadian Army, and an observation and transport squadron of the RCAF. They were sneered at by some in the heat of partisan debate as a typewriter army, but they were indispensable to the success of UNEF. They played, and are still playing, a courageous and essential role.

This last-minute need to re-organize the Canadian contingent was not only a source of political embarrassment but a cause of delay in getting Canadian troops to Palestine. Both could have been avoided if there had been advance United Nations planning for such peace-keeping operations and co-ordinated preparations in the military establishments of the contributing countries.

Similar problems - the political problem of achieving balanced composition and the practical problem of finding qualified units and personnel for maintaining a mixed force - arose when the Congo crisis broke in 1960 and the United Nations was again asked to provide a peace-keeping force. There was no lack of infantry contingents and it was very desirable that the countries of Africa should provide most of them. Technical units and specialists were also needed, however, and national establishments had to be combed for suitable personnel.

The UNEF experience was available because the Secretary-General had produced a very useful study in 1958. But the United Nations faced a very different situation in the Congo and the demands on its military force were much more complicated. Quite apart from the political difficulties, which multiplied as the operation progressed, once again, as in the case of UNEF, there were technical delays and administrative and other difficulties.

Again our own experience can be cited. For both UNEF and ONUC, mainly because of the nature of our participation, it was necessary to organize new Canadian units to form the contingent. This caused some disruption in our