

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 56/22

MIDDLE EAST

A statement made on November 2 at an Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly by the Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, Mr. L.B. Pearson. The statement was made in explanation of Canada's vote on all parties involved in hostilities to agree to an immediate cease-fire and to halt the movement of military forces and arms into the area.

I rise not to take part in this debate, because the debate is over. The vote has been taken. But I do wish to explain the abstention of my delegation on that vote.

It is never easy to explain an abstention, and in this case it is particularly difficult because we are in favour of some parts of this resolution, and also because this resolution deals with such a complicated question.

Because we are in favour of some parts of the resolution, we could not vote against it, especially as, in our opinion, it is a moderate proposal couched in reasonable and objective terms, without unfair or unbalanced condemnation; and also, by referring to violations by both sides to the armistice agreements, it puts, I think, recent action by the United Kingdom and France -- and rightly -- against the background of those repeated violations and provocations.

We support the effort being made to bring the fighting to an end. We support it, among other reasons, because we regret that force was used in the circumstances that face us at this time. As my delegation sees it, however, this resolution which the General Assembly has thus adopted in its present form -- and there was very little chance to alter that form -- is inadequate to achieve the purpose which we have in mind at this Assembly. These purposes are defined in that resolution of the United Nations under which we are meeting -- resolution 377(V), uniting for peace -- and peace is far more than ceasing to fire, although it certainly must include that essential factor. This is the first time that action has been taken under the "Uniting for Peace" resolution, and I confess to a feeling of sadness, indeed