

## *Franco-Tunisian Dispute Over Bizerta*

The dispute between France and Tunisia over the French base at Bizerta came before the United Nations in July, 1961, after violent fighting between French and Tunisian forces had broken out. The Security Council met at the request of Tunisia, and on July 22 adopted an interim resolution calling for a cease-fire and the return of all armed forces to their original positions. While the cease-fire appeal was complied with, the French refused to withdraw their troops to the positions previously held without Tunisian guarantees concerning communications between the various base installations. The United Nations Secretary-General visited Tunisia, at the request of President Bourguiba, in an unsuccessful attempt at conciliation. The Security Council ultimately adjourned without adopting any final resolution.

Tunisia and 34 other states, mostly African and Asian, subsequently wrote to the Secretary-General requesting a special session of the General Assembly. This third special session took place between August 21 and 25, and ended with the adoption of a resolution which was critical of France and called for negotiations for withdrawal of French forces. The vote was 66 in favour, none opposed, with 30 abstentions (including Canada).

Canada's decision to abstain, as the Canadian Representative explained during the debate, related to the wording of some parts of the resolution. Canada was in sympathy with much of its content. In particular, Canada endorsed the resolution's expression of concern that France had not fully complied with the provisions of the interim Security Council resolution, and supported the appeal to the parties to enter into immediate negotiations. However, Canada did not consider that the prospects for such negotiations would be favoured by critical references in the resolution's preamble to the effects of the presence of French armed forces on Tunisian soil. The Canadian Representative also questioned whether a reference in the operative portion to the object of negotiations as being "agreed measures . . . for the withdrawal of all French armed forces from Tunisian territory" did not go too far in prejudging the conclusions to be reached by the negotiations.

## *Kuwait*

Shortly after Kuwait assumed responsibility for the conduct of its foreign affairs and negotiated a new agreement with Britain to replace the former Treaty of Friendship between the two countries during June, 1961, Prime Minister Qasim reasserted Iraq's claim to sovereignty over Kuwait and denounced the Anglo-Kuwaiti Agreement. Fearing an invasion from Iraq, Kuwait requested military aid from Britain and Saudi Arabia. Contingents from the two countries were soon stationed along the Iraq-Kuwait border.

On the request of Britain, Iraq and Kuwait, the Security Council met from July 2-7 to discuss the Kuwait issue. A British resolution (which called