



The United Nations

Security Council

On October 26 the UN General Assembly elected Canada and four other countries to the Security Council for a two-year term beginning January 1, 1989. This election marked the fifth occasion in the 44-year history of the United Nations that Canada is serving on the Security Council, which now has 15 members.

On the previous four occasions it was elected to the Security Council, Canada did not have to compete with other nations for its seat: there had been prior consensus among the Western countries in Canada's regional group on its nomination. This time Canada found itself competing with Finland and Greece for one of the two seats allocated to its group. For this reason the Department undertook a major campaign in the months leading up to the General Assembly, which involved seeking the votes of all member states of the UN, an activity that was carried out by all missions abroad, in New York and in other UN headquarter cities. Canada received 127 votes, which represented support from 80 per cent of the membership and an impressive vote of confidence for Canada as a contributor to international peace and security.

Immediately upon joining the Security Council, Canada had to participate in meetings on the shooting down of two Libyan aircraft by United States fighters over the Mediterranean Sea. Canada's Permanent Representative told the Council that Canada had sought and received information on the incident from both parties, but had ultimately voted against the resolution condemning the U.S. action because it placed full blame for the incident on the U.S. government, despite evidence that misunderstandings and errors in judgment by the Libyan pilots played a role. The resolution was defeated as a result of vetoes by the U.S., U.K., and France.

From the beginning of its term on the Security Council, Canada was involved in negotiations to authorize the creation of a UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) for Namibia and to launch the process intended to bring independence to that country. The Council also became engaged in negotiations over the implementation of its Resolution 435 of 1978, which provides the framework for Namibian independence. Canada, which had played a prominent role as a member of the Western Contact Group (together with France, U.S., U.K. and F.R.G.) in drafting Resolution 435 during its previous term on the Security Council, looked forward to assisting in its full implementation. The process was not smooth, however, as protracted debates on UNTAG's size and budget delayed approval. While cognizant of the need for financial prudence, Canada

urged that priority be given to ensuring an effective UN presence that would be able to guide Namibia peacefully through the transition to independence. Canada was active in bilateral consultations and informal meetings in seeking such assurances.

Resolution 632, which confirmed April 1, 1989, as the starting date for the implementation of Resolution 435, was adopted unanimously on February 16, 1989, and the budget was approved by the General Assembly on March 2. While Canada was indeed glad to help launch the long-awaited implementation of Resolution 435, Mr. Clark underlined the challenges that lay ahead for UNTAG during the coming year. Indeed, delays in approval of the plan and its budget compressed the minimum six- to eight-week lead time requested by the Secretary-General for deploying UNTAG into less than four weeks.

The Security Council met on February 10, to consider the deteriorating situation in the Palestinian occupied territories. In January and February there was no sign that the level of violence surrounding the Palestinian uprising (or *Intifada*) in the occupied territories was abating. To draw attention to the continuing plight of the Palestinians, Tunisia, as the country chairing the Arab group, with the support of the Palestine Liberation Organization, requested the Security Council to debate the situation in the occupied territories.

In its intervention in the debate, Canada reiterated its determined support of Israel's right to security and recognition, and explained that it is the shared values upon which Canada's historic bond of friendship with the State of Israel is established that compelled it to express deep concern over continued violations of human rights of the Palestinian people of the occupied territories. After a series of lengthy negotiations, the Arab group replaced much of their condemnatory language in the resolution in the hope of attracting broad support. Canada supported the resolution, along with all other members of the Council except the United States, but it was not adopted because of the U.S. veto.

On March 31, the Security Council met in an informal session to review the situation in Lebanon. It decided that the Council's president would issue a statement on the Council's behalf, which expressed encouragement and support for all current efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Lebanese crisis and urged all the parties to put an end to the confrontations, to respond favourably to the appeals launched for an effective ceasefire and to avoid any action that might further heighten the tension.

Reform of the United Nations

The process of administrative and budgetary reform of the United Nations continued during the year. While the