

I have endeavoured to describe the elements of the crisis which is at present facing the United Nations. It is not, of course, the first such crisis to have preoccupied us but it may well be the most serious. For its outcome may determine the shape of the future destiny of the United Nations. Is the United Nations to endure -- as the Secretary-General recently put it -- "as a dynamic and effective instrument of international action" or is it to survive -- in the words of The Economist -- "merely as a spectacular talkathon, pickled and powerless"? That is the real issue we are facing today.

I would not wish to conclude these observations without saying something about the Canadian position. Canada has a vital stake in peace keeping. We have participated in every major peace-keeping operation undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations since 1948. We have set aside standby forces within our military establishment to be at the disposal of the United Nations in situations of emergency. We look upon the evolution of the idea of peace keeping as reflecting the will and determination of the world community to work towards a peaceful and securely ordered world. Much as we might wish it were otherwise, we do not think that the need for a United Nations capacity to keep the peace is likely to diminish in the foreseeable future.

The present crisis did not break upon us suddenly. It has been building up for some time and we have played an active part, over the past year or two, in the working group that was set up by the General Assembly to look into possible solutions. It was our hope that, if reasonable arrangements could be devised for future peace-keeping operations, there would be no difficulty in liquidating the past. But that assumption has turned out to be unrealistic, and it is now clear that all aspects of the peace-keeping problem -- present, past and future -- will need to be brought within the compass of negotiation. In the process of negotiation it is accepted, I think, that the permanent members of the Security Council will have a special responsibility for staking out the area within which an accommodation may be possible. This does not diminish, however, the stake which each and every member of the United Nations has in the outcome of the present crisis.

As far as Canada is concerned, our objectives in the impending negotiations are simple and clear-cut. They are:

First, to restore the United Nations to solvency and to prevent the possibility of a recurrence of the present crisis;

Second, to preserve the capacity of the United Nations to play its rightful part in the maintenance of international peace and security;

Third, to accomplish these objectives on the basis of the broadest possible consensus, which alone will ensure that the solutions devised with regard to peace keeping are effective and durable and that the United Nations is once more enabled to press forward with other urgent business.