We in Canada share the hope of other governments, such as your own, that the day will come when political agreement will make it possible for the United Nations to be fully capable of keeping the peace. Meanwhile, we think a good deal can be done in an informal way to strengthen the United Nations by enabling it to respond more quickly and more effectively in an emergency. We hope that other countries will decide to set up stand-by military forces for United Nations service as Canada, the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands have done. Iran also has recently announced its intention to create such a force. We are encouraged by the Secretary-General's strong support for the stand-by concept and by the steps which have been taken to create a small military advisers' staff within the Secretariat. As a further step, we have proposed a meeting to exchange experience on the practical military problems encountered in United Nations operations. We believe that a meeting of this sort, at the working level and among people with a first-hand knowledge of these problems, would be of particular help to those countries which can expect to be called upon to assist the United Nations in future emergencies.

Financing

Peace-keeping action will obviously be quick and effective only if the United Nations can proceed in the sure knowledge that the money will be there when the bills are presented. In recent weeks you have all become increasingly aware of the bitter debate now raging on the obligation of all member states to pay their assessed share of duly authorized peace-keeping operations. It is a debate which reaches into the past and casts a long shadow on the future -- for I think it must be clear that what we are arguing about is not simply the debts which have arisen from past peace-keeping efforts but the means of financing those operations which may be authorized in the future. There must, to my mind, be movement on both fronts.

The question of past arrears threatens to develop into a serious confrontation when the General Assembly opens its doors next month. There is no avoiding the stark fact that the United Nations now runs an operating cash deficit of close to $120 million, of which well over 90 per cent represents arrears owed in respect of the costs of the United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East and the United Nations Operation in the Congo. The Soviet Union and its allies, who account for the lion's share of these arrears, persist in regarding these two peace-keeping operations as illegal adventures, because they were not fully in accordance with the Soviet thesis that the Security Council alone can initiate, direct and make financial arrangements for operations to maintain the peace. On these grounds, the Soviet Union has refused to pay one penny of the costs.

I will not burden you with the overwhelming evidence which persuades us that the Soviet Union is wrong. Suffice it to say that the Charter makes it clear that the Security Council has primary but not exclusive responsibility in this sphere; that the General Assembly has formally accepted the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that the expenditures incurred in the Middle East and in the Congo were "expenses of the organization", which all member states were obliged to pay; and that the Charter clearly and specifically provides in Article 19 that members whose arrears exceed the two previous years' assessments shall have no vote.