

2. FINANCING UNEF AND UNDOF

In the Fifth Committee Mr. Carl Pedersen, the Canadian Representative, introduced a draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors. The draft resolution was to enable the General Assembly to take the necessary decisions for the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East: the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) and the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). Urging all member states to support the draft resolution, Mr. Pedersen said United Nations peacekeeping operations could be counted among the most successful activities of the Organization. The stationing of UN contingents in sensitive areas had proved to be a major stabilizing factor, which had prevented the renewal of hostilities and enhanced the prospects for peaceful settlements. The Canadian Delegation believed the peacekeeping operations were the collective responsibility of all 150 member states and it viewed with concern the withholding by several member states of all or part of their assessed contributions. That not only had the effect of placing a heavier financial burden on those countries which provided contingents and jeopardizing the participation of developing countries in such operations, but also threatened the continued existence of those forces. If the United Nations did not manage to find a solution to the problem urgently, the day might come when it would no longer be able to interpose a peacekeeping force, even if the member states wished to do so. Here are some of the Canadian Representative's comments on this subject:

This resolution is tabled in response to the growing difficulties faced by the Secretary-General in meeting the financial obligations of the forces on a current basis, particularly those due to the troop contributors. The consolidated status of the fund for UNEF and UNDOF shows an excess of income over expenditure of approximately 17.7 million dollars for the periods October 25, 1973 to October 24, 1977. Under the provisions of the financial regulations of the UN, this amount has to be credited against member states' assessments. As members will appreciate, however, this surplus is only a book surplus in that UNEF/UNDOF operations incur a deficit in real terms since some member states refuse to pay their assessed contributions. As the Secretary-General has indicated, the financial situation of the forces will soon be reaching a critical stage. Recrediting this amount at this time therefore will worsen the UN's cash flow situation and make it more difficult for the controller to pay the UN's bills for these peacekeeping operations.

It therefore becomes essential both in keeping the forces solvent and in paying those countries which have provided troops, that we avoid exacerbating an already difficult situation. In this connection, we can ameliorate the cash flow situation by suspending the relevant provisions of the financial regulations as concerns the amount in question and enter it under a separately identified UN account. Passage of this measure would not in any way serve as a precedent nor would it prejudice the action to be taken by the Thirty-Fourth General Assembly, including the possible crediting of this amount back to member states. Mr. Chairman, surely therefore to take no action would be irresponsible both in terms of maintaining the viability of the forces and in meeting the very real needs and concerns of those member states who have contributed troops and material. My delegation would hope that this measure, which we believe meets the criteria of fiscal responsibility and the political principles involved, would commend itself to this Committee.