

Earlier there were encouraging signs that both these powers were concerned that the conflict should not be widened or prolonged although signs now point in another direction. I hope that the great powers are still concerned to use their restraining influence to help bring about a ceasefire followed by negotiations. Otherwise one cannot envisage anything but a continuing conflict with increasing casualties on both sides, and with the supplier states finding themselves arraigned in opposite camps as in the worst days of the cold war.

It is a bleak prospect indeed that with replenished supplies at their disposal, both sides should continue the artillery duels, the tank battles, the strafing and bombing by aircraft while casualties mount among the civilian population and the theatre of war tends increasingly to engulf cities away from the main field of battle.

There can be no victory in this atmosphere but only losers on all sides. In the long term, since a just and lasting settlement is not possible without the agreement of both sides, it is obvious that the way to a settlement is not through a war of attrition which seems to be developing at this time. The longer this is allowed to continue, the more heavy will be the human losses and the material devastation. Until now, the war has been fought largely in the territories of the Suez Canal and the Golan Heights, and the fighting has not seriously affected the major population centres either in Syria, in Egypt, or in Israel. But who can foresee what a prolongation of the war will bring? Already there are reports that the bombing of military targets has brought losses to the civilian populations. It would be an even more grievous conflict if ground warfare should bring the contending forces within gunfire of the large cities, as is likely to happen unless an end is put to the fight.

At the beginning of hostilities there were relatively few Canadians in the area and I am happy to report that until now there have been no casualties among the Canadian residents or tourists present.

Canadian diplomatic missions in the war area are actively concerned about the safety of Canadian residents and visitors in their areas of responsibility. The embassies maintain records of Canadian residents and endeavour to keep track of visitors to assist in maintaining contact with them in time of trouble. Contact is normally made by telephone, though telephone facilities sometimes become overloaded.

All international airports in the area, with the exception of Damascus and Cairo, remain open for scheduled flights. As a consequence, no build-up of stranded tourists wishing to return home has developed except in Cairo where, on October 10, 1973 approximately 100 Canadian visitors were waiting for transportation from the area.

This number is gradually being reduced, as tourists, with embassy assistance, obtain bookings on ships sailing from Alexandria and on buses to Benhazi. Arrangements are now being completed to enable any Canadian tourists who remain from this number, or residents who wish to do so, to leave on a ship which the Americans have chartered.

Our embassies in Cairo and Tel Aviv have reported that they are not aware of any injuries to Canadians in their area and that all whom they have been able to contact are safe and well. All Canadians who wished to do so have already left Syria.