

Since Canada has just commenced its fifth term on the Security Council for the period from January 1989 to the end of December 1990, it is valuable to review briefly its previous experiences on the Council.

#### *Term I: 1948/49*

Surprisingly, Canada's first term on the Council was also the most successful one. Canada contributed to substantive decisions which helped to contain or resolve some critical international conflicts. This was a time when the Council was seized of several major conflicts, including the creation of the state of Israel, independence of Indonesia, the dispute over Kashmir, and the Berlin blockade. For the first three, which remained largely peripheral to the intensifying Cold War, there was considerable scope for action by members of the Council. Canada took an active part in the efforts to transform the truce arrangements between Israel and her Arab neighbours into a more durable armistice, and to facilitate the admission of Israel to the UN.

Canada's Permanent Representative, General McNaughton, dominated the proceedings of the Council, to a degree which was unusual for a non-permanent member, by the force of his cogent arguments and charismatic personality. He provided continuing direction during the protracted negotiations over Indonesian independence. In March 1949, he came up with a formula which broke the stalemate between the Netherlands and the Council and paved the way for the final settlement on the independence of Indonesia.

Although it ultimately failed, his mediation performance in the Kashmir dispute was no less impressive. He originally embarked on informal consultations with India and Pakistan during his term as President of the Council in December 1949. The Council then officially asked him to act as mediator, a role he continued for a while even after Canada had ceased to be a member of the Council. McNaughton's mediation strategy may be regarded as a model of fairness, flexibility and resourcefulness. Within the UN, there was considerable optimism that a settlement of the hitherto intractable Kashmir dispute was at hand, a view which was shared by the principal Indian and Pakistani negotiators. The plan which he proposed envisaged a balanced military disengagement by both parties in Kashmir that would not pose a security threat to either side. Military disengagement was to be followed by a plebiscite. The logic of McNaughton's plan in some ways foreshadows the rationale of contemporary arms control negotiations on balanced force reductions in Europe. The principle of symmetrical force reductions, which was central to McNaughton's scheme, proved unacceptable to India but served as a model for subsequent, though equally unsuccessful, UN proposals for a Kashmir settlement.

#### *Term II: 1958/1959*

This period may generally be seen as one of lost opportunities for the Security Council to mitigate the Cold

War. It produced several imaginative exploratory schemes or proposals by Canada. All of them remained unrealized in the climate of intense Cold War confrontation. The idea of giving the UN responsibility for supervising an international agreement on Berlin, including access routes, found no favour with Canada's Western allies. The proposal for a system of international inspection of the Arctic to reduce the threat of nuclear surprise attack, which was advanced by the US and Canada, was firmly rejected by the Soviet Union. The idea of a high-level meeting of the Security Council to deal with the crisis in Lebanon and Jordan and help prepare the way for a smaller Middle East conference, which was vigorously championed by Canada, proved equally unacceptable to the Soviets.

#### *Term III: 1967/68*

The agenda of the Security Council for this period was dominated by the 1967 Middle East war, Cyprus and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. The events of the 1967 Middle East war proved particularly frustrating for Canada. Attempts by the Canadian and Danish representatives to persuade the Security Council to take preventive measures that might forestall the escalation of the Middle East crisis to a full-fledged war proved fruitless. Similarly, Canadian efforts to avoid an instant and unconditional UN response to the order by Egypt's President Nasser to evict UNEF troops from the Sinai failed. Moreover, Arab countries interpreted the UN response as an unfriendly act; any opportunity for Canada to exert a mediating influence during the war and its immediate aftermath had been undermined. Only in the less central issues, such as clarifying the facts of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, or helping to establish communication between the United States and North Korea following the "Pueblo" incident, did Canadian diplomacy prove more successful.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Term IV: 1977/78*

The peace initiative of Egypt's President Sadat provided a rare period of relative calm in the Middle East. The agenda of the Council concentrated more on Southern Africa with its interrelated problems of *apartheid*, Zimbabwe majority rule and independence for Namibia. In order to coordinate their respective policies on these issues more effectively, the Western powers on the Security Council — Britain, Canada, France, the German Federal Republic, and the United States — set up an informal consultative forum, referred to as the Contact Group or the Group of Five. The Contact Group made available its good offices in trying to find broad UN acceptance for a peace plan for Namibia. The plan comprised withdrawal by South Africa, free elections under UN supervision, and UN administrative services during Namibia's transition to independence. Although Canada was the least powerful member of the Group, it fulfilled three important functions: harmonizing members' interests; acting as the Group's spokesman in the UN, and during visits to Southern Africa;