

*Arab-Israeli War*

sense could have come only from and at the encouragement of the Soviet Union. That, Sir, is the tragedy within the tragedy of the Middle-East. That the Soviet Union would pursue a policy of upsetting the existing balance of power there, while suing for peace, détente and understanding elsewhere, is incomprehensible and, frankly, puzzling. My party has joined with others in this House in welcoming the growth of détente and east-west understanding. What reasonable man would not? Yet there is a loophole in the détente of the Soviets, a loophole that seems to be wide enough for Arab and Israeli blood to flow quite freely. There are those who would talk about an arms embargo now. Yet to discuss that embargo after the weighing down by the Soviets of the scales on one side has brought about this outbreak seems a little naïve and not all that relevant.

● (2030)

My party takes the view that where previous initiatives have failed—and I refer to the Jarring mission of the U.N. in particular—new efforts should be undertaken. It may be possible that some new aegis for negotiation moderated by middle powers slightly more disinterested than the great powers would have some greater success than previous efforts. In any event, we would hope that it could be offered and that Canada might make that offer with others.

The extent of the present difficulty is really not known. To what extent will the Soviets continue their build-up? Will they supplement their technical advisers and other assistance with more damning participation? How far will our neighbour to the south be forced to go in order to maintain the balance? These are haunting questions that are being answered bit by bit as more and more die on both sides in the Middle-East.

There is one question that we as parliamentarians and human beings must answer, and answer quickly. Do we believe that Arab and Israeli blood is cheaper than our own? Are we prepared to say that Arabs and Israelis can continue to fight their battles without interference? Is this to be the approach that we can condone? I suggest that no one in this chamber wants any part of that type of thinking. I suggest that both the Arabs and the Israelis cannot afford many more little wars at regular intervals. I suggest that we will indeed be lucky if the present conflict remains within the category of a little war.

The international community must exert its influence on the belligerents so that the seeds of war are replaced by the seeds of peace. For example, on the question of the refugees, where something less than compromise has characterized the attitude of both sides, friends of both sides should encourage the creation of an international commission of inquiry, with representatives of both east and west, for the purpose of mapping out options and alternatives that the Middle-Eastern community might be encouraged to consider. It is clear that as long as Israel rejects responsibility for these individuals, and the Arab states propose only a solution that would threaten Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state, the principals to the dispute will not be able to reach a reasonable solution.

On the general question of negotiation, while not in any way questioning the good will or potential of the United

[Mr. Wagner.]

Nations, I believe that the continuing conflict indicates that negotiations at the UN cannot take the place of negotiations between the principals themselves. If, as the Arabs claim, Israel occupies Arab territory, then the Arab states must seek to negotiate the return of that territory from Israel. If, as Israel claims, she desires but a lasting and secure peace, then she must negotiate that peace with the Arab states based on Arab concerns for the return of territory. While international agencies are not to be ruled out, their role might be more usefully that of bringing the two parties together to negotiate with one another.

Canadians of both Arab and Jewish origin are deeply concerned about the conflict, and for reasons that other Canadians understand full well. Our government can best respond to these groups' concerns by reflecting the bipartisan will of this House in seeking those initiatives that will truly open new avenues and channels of peace for both sides. This may involve some frank exchanges between our government and the Soviet Union. I feel sure the minister understands that he will have the support of my colleagues in any initiative he might take in this regard.

The Middle-East is not any more an issue at which Canadians can look in terms of one side being all right and another being all wrong. The sense of injustice and bitterness on both sides makes such an analysis most simplistic. Yet the present crisis, the present difficulty, cannot be laid at Israel's door. A massive Soviet-built force was set against Israel on her southern and northern flank. Notwithstanding the rationales both historically and otherwise that exist on both sides of the Middle-East dispute, the unilateral violation of the 1967 ceasefire lines cannot be construed as an act of peace or good will.

The tragedy of the Middle-East is told in the story of a horse trying to cross a small body of water in the Middle-East and finding a scorpion on its back poised to strike. The horse tried in vain to convince the scorpion that, should it strike, both would plummet to an untimely death on the river bed. As the scorpion struck and both sank to the depths, the horse turned in puzzlement to the scorpion and asked, "Why?" The scorpion laughed and answered, "Because this is the Middle-East." The scorpion rides not only the back of the Middle-East; it is riding the back of the entire world. If we cannot eradicate its venom, we must at least be united with others in searching for an antidote.

● (2040)

I happen to believe that it is an inestimable tragedy for Arab and Israeli to do battle rather than to live side by side. It is tragic that two great civilizations should be faced with no other alternative. And as soon as a war breaks out, the alternatives are always limited and the options are always restricted. The option of peace in the Middle-East will not be furthered by ceasefire violations. It can only be enhanced by a desire to turn a transient ceasefire into a permanent arrangement.

It is possible, Mr. Speaker, that the survival of peace in the Middle-East will be coupled with the issue of the survival of secure borders. There are still those who indicate that the only peace will be that following the destruction of Israel and the end of her survival. That, Mr.