

United Nations peacekeeping operations have served this Organization well in its task of maintaining international peace and security. Since 1956, when the first UN peacekeeping force was established, the presence of blue berets has helped reduce tensions in crises with the ultimate intent of creating the right climate for a negotiated settlement of the conflict in question. Since 1973, three new peacekeeping forces have taken the field. In March of this year, the Security Council established the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). In September, the Council authorized the creation of a United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) to serve in Namibia. Other UN peacekeeping operations and observer missions continue in the Middle East, Cyprus and elsewhere. Despite this demonstration of the continuing importance of UN peacekeeping, political differences continue to inhibit the Organization from making full use of previous peacekeeping experience. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations continues its search for agreed guidelines on the establishment, command, control and financing of peacekeeping missions. The practical aspects of peacekeeping remain under discussion. However, during this past year, there has been little examination of or progress on these matters in that Committee. While this situation persists, UN forces are still being set up on an ad hoc basis and this obviously is unsatisfactory.

The events of the last year have tended to confirm the lessons which Canada has drawn from its participation in peacekeeping. First, both the peacekeeping and "peacemaking" process must be tackled concurrently if a negotiated solution to a dispute is ever to be found. Provision should be made wherever possible, when the Security Council is establishing a new force, that its mandate be of a limited duration and that means to settle the dispute be envisaged. In Cyprus, the simple presence of UNFICYP has not sufficed to solve the problems of that island. What is needed is the resumption of negotiations on a continuous basis between the two communities under UN auspices. In the Middle East, by contrast, the Camp David agreements between Egypt and Israel appear to have successfully advanced the "peacemaking" process and this process has unquestionably been facilitated by the presence of UNEF in the Sinai peninsula. A crucial prerequisite for the success of a peacekeeping mission is that the parties concerned accept the presence of the force and agree to maintain a ceasefire. The importance of this has been underlined in southern Lebanon since UNIFIL was created. Despite the force's accomplishments to date, we cannot overlook the problems it has encountered in fulfilling all the terms of its mandate. If UNIFIL is to achieve complete success, it must have the full co-operation and backing of all those in the region.

The respective roles of the Security Council and the Secretary-General in the command, control and supervision of peacekeeping operations remain in dispute in the Committee of 33. While there can be no doubt of the primacy of the Security Council in the establishment of peacekeeping operations, we continue to believe that the Secretary-General must have clear authority to direct the day-to-day operations of any peacekeeping force. Otherwise the Organization will not be able to respond adequately and expeditiously to the urgent and unforeseen problems that inevitably occur in the course of an operation. The Secretary-General should also nominate the force commander, as he is in the best position to select a qualified commander acceptable to the parties concerned and to the Security Council.