

## Peacekeeping

# Some rules for peacekeeping

A world in which the threat of war means an ever-present danger of total destruction owes a great deal to the patient forces that keep the peace in areas of conflict. So much depends on these forces doing their job well. Canada's considerable experience of peacekeeping makes her something of an authority on this relatively new and difficult subject.

When at the end of last year Canada sent peacekeeping forces for a second time to the Sinai Desert, it was said with a sad touch of irony that they were "specialists" at keeping the peace in that area. They were not only specialists in the terrain: they also had behind them the unhappy memory of being withdrawn in 1967 after 11 years of peacekeeping which brought actual peace no nearer. As soon as they withdrew, a new Arab-Israeli war raged over the ground they had held.

They do not want the scene to repeat itself. So this time Canada has tried to take a tougher line on conditions to be firmly established *before* they would agree to send in a peacekeeping force.

Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, talked in Parliament of the conditions they were seeking before the first contingent of Canadians went off to the Middle East at the end of last year.

First, he said, "there is no point in participating in a peacekeeping operation unless our participation is acceptable to all, and especially to the sovereign state upon whose soil the force is to be deployed."

He went on, "I can assure the House that we did not accept this task until the Secretary General (of the United Nations) had given us formal assurance that the presence of a Canadian contingent would be acceptable to all parties, and especially to Egypt, since UNEF will be deployed in Egyptian territory. In addition, I confirmed the Egyptian agreement personally with the Foreign Minister of Egypt when I met him . . . in Washington."

The original peacekeeping force that went to the Middle East in 1956 did not come under the authority of the Security Council but of the General Assembly, nor did it have the unqualified backing of the great powers. It was, says Mr. Sharp, "a brilliant improvisation that brought the international community back from the edge of disaster but could not ensure peace."

He feels that the outlook is better now because "This time the super-powers jointly proposed a peacekeeping force, and all



members of the Security Council, except China, approved."

Last October the Secretary-General, in his report to the Security Council, set out as essential conditions that the peacekeeping force in the Middle East must have at all times the full confidence and backing of the Security Council and that it must operate with the full co-operation of the parties concerned.

It was this report and its subsequent acceptance by the Security Council that finally reassured the Canadian Government and persuaded them to accede to a request for Canadian forces to help keep the peace. They are sharing the task with a force from Poland, also sent at the request of the Security Council.

Another lesson of the 1956-67 vigil was that a peacekeeping force must be clearly recognized by all parties as a *temporary* necessity, to help avoid a renewal of fighting while the adversaries get on with the task of sorting out the problem which caused the fighting in the first place. "It is precisely because the parties involved made no progress toward a peaceful settlement in the 10 years following 1956 that ultimately UNEF had to depart without any other prospect than renewed warfare," Mr. Sharp said.

"With this in mind, I stressed on October 28 that, while we warmly welcomed the call for a cease-fire, it was vitally important, in our view, that the cease-fire should lead quickly to negotiations on the basic problems of the Middle East."

In the same speech to Parliament, Mr. Sharp drew up a more general list of criteria for peacekeeping, arising out of Canada's whole experience in this role. He

said the Government had no illusions that, in this imperfect world, the criteria for ideal peacekeeping would ever be met in full.

"These criteria must, however, be constantly reiterated and promoted if peacekeeping is to be made a more effective instrument rather than a source of disillusionment to a world community hungry for peace."

The criteria, said Mr. Sharp, "include certain points of a political nature as well as others of a more technical kind."

A fundamental point was that there must be a threat to international peace and security (undoubtedly true of the Middle East situation).

Peacekeeping should be directly linked to agreement on a political settlement among the parties to the conflict; at least there should be reasonable expectations that the parties will negotiate a settlement.

The peacekeeping force must be responsible to a political authority, preferably the United Nations: the sponsoring authority should receive reports and have adequate power to supervise the mandate of the force.

The parties of the conflict must accept the peacekeeping force.

The peacekeeping force must have a clear mandate, including such things as freedom of movement

There must be an agreed and equitable method of financing the operations.

It looks a simple and fairly obvious set of rules. But a lot of tough experience has gone into the framing of them. ♦