

Canadian Government, should have seen a slight easing of tension in the Middle East at the specific time when for, shall we say, domestic political reasons we might like to have let some of our arms shipments go off.

Mr. Pearson:

Of course, that is one interpretation of it. No, I think those things may appear to have coincided but I do feel, however, that in the last two weeks or so, quite irrespective of any other considerations, things have eased a little bit. You have heard the reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and of the British Foreign Secretary when he got back. While it would be very silly to suggest that fundamentally there has been a change, for the problems have not been solved, I think there has been an easing somewhat of tension in the last two weeks.

Press:

Since we have got onto this question of Canada's part in the Middle East, I think a lot of Canadians wonder just what Canada is doing in shipping arms to the Middle East at all. This is perhaps an explosive area at some times at least and I think we wonder what we are doing in the arms business out there.

Mr. Pearson:

Oh yes, that is a subject we have all been discussing, I think rightly so, because it is a matter not only of interest but of importance. When you talk about Canada being in the arms business, I prefer putting it this way, whether Canada should refuse to ship defence equipment to countries which are building up their own defence forces and who don't represent any threat to Canada at all. It would be a very simple and convenient thing, I suppose, from some points of view, if we could say "we will ship no arms to anybody".

Press:

Well, at least not to explosive areas.

Mr. Pearson:

To any area of tension, we will ship no arms. If you had applied that principle to the Middle East, that area, since the birth of Israel, has been an area of tension hasn't it? In fact, it was an area of war when Israel was founded. If we had all decided at