

*Arab-Israeli War*

A ceasefire, while undoubtedly necessary at the earliest possible moment, as I said in my statements of October 6 and October 8, will not be enough. A ceasefire should provide the opportunity for the belligerents to discuss such questions as the drawing of border lines or the resettlement of civilian populations displaced by warfare, or indeed any of the other points mentioned in the resolution. Unfortunately, the past 25 years of conflict in the Middle-East prove that without the will to make peace on both sides, a ceasefire is only a temporary expedient between bouts of war and a period in which the two sides rearm and prepare for the next round of fighting.

Canadian policy, as I repeated in the House yesterday, begins from the premise that the State of Israel has a right to exist, just like any other state in the world, and the right to exist behind secure and recognized boundaries. Some of us, Mr. Speaker, have had the privilege of visiting Israel. We had the experience of flying from south to north in a few minutes, seeing the whole of Israel spread out below us. I think we understand the concern for recognized and secure boundaries.

The first states to recognize its boundaries must be its neighbours, those states that share these boundaries with it. It follows that the frontiers of Israel must be negotiated between these neighbour states and Israel in order that they will be accepted by all. A ceasefire which does not open the way for negotiation in that direction will not deal with the basic problems of the area. We understand the grave difficulties but we plead that a start be made on the road to a negotiated settlement.

I have noted with approval the statement of the nine member countries of the European Community, which says:

This ceasefire, which would make it possible to spare the peoples affected by the war further tragic ordeals, should at the same time pave the way for true negotiation in an appropriate forum, permitting a settlement of the conflict in accordance with all the provisions of resolution 242.

As I have said on previous occasions, Canada remains prepared to play its part in a UN context if there is a useful role for us. We could envisage a contribution to peacekeeping if desired and required by the parties as well as the continuation of peace observation operations. These would, of course, be under the authority of the United Nations for we consider, as I said at New York on September 25, that only under such an authority do these operations stand the best chance of success. Canada has participated in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization since 1954. While as a result of the current hostilities some of the UNTSO posts in the Suez Canal area have had to be evacuated, I should like to emphasize that UNTSO continues to exist even though it is unable to pursue fully at the present all of its commitments. It is important that it remain intact for future duty.

If the parties to the conflict are prepared to have a peacekeeping force constituted under the authority of the United Nations, we would be prepared to make our contribution. However, I would emphasize that parties to the conflict would first have to agree on the basis of a settlement and terms of reference for such a force for Canada to accept participation in peacekeeping. That is a lesson that our experience, particularly in Indo-China, has taught us. Unless there is a basic agreement by the parties involved,

[Mr. Sharp.]

the peacekeeping functions cannot be discharged satisfactorily. We must admit that it is one of the distressing aspects of the situation that parties do not appear likely to agree at this time and it is very discouraging that the Security Council has so far been unable itself to agree on a call for a ceasefire or on any other action.

While the war is going on, others have growing responsibilities and can either prolong hostilities or exert great influence in the direction of peace. The major suppliers of arms to both sides obviously can exert a moderating or stimulating influence. The United States Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, in his press conference on Friday, October 12, issued a call for moderation on the part of the Soviet Union, especially in the matter of supplying arms. It is unfortunate that the Soviet Union should have continued supplying arms since this appeal was made, and of course we now have the situation in which the U.S. in its turn has also felt compelled to do so.

Earlier there were encouraging signs that both these powers were concerned that the conflict should not be widened or prolonged although signs now point in another direction. I hope that the great powers are still concerned to use their restraining influence to help bring about a ceasefire followed by negotiations. Otherwise one cannot envisage anything but a continuing conflict with increasing casualties on both sides and with the supplier states finding themselves arraigned in opposite camps as in the worst days of the cold war. It is a bleak prospect indeed that, with replenished supplies at their disposal, both sides should continue the artillery duels, the tank battles, the strafing and bombing by aircraft while casualties mount among the civilian population and the theatre of war tends increasingly to engulf cities away from the main field of battle.

There can be no victory in this atmosphere, but only losers on all sides. In the long term, since a just and lasting settlement is not possible without the agreement of both sides, it is obvious that the way to a settlement is not through a war of attrition which seems to be developing at this time. The longer this is allowed to continue, the more heavy will be the human losses and the material devastation.

Until now, the war has been fought largely in the territories of the Suez Canal and the Golan Heights and the fighting has not seriously affected the major population centres either in Syria, in Egypt or in Israel. But who can foresee what a prolongation of the war will bring? Already there are reports that the bombing of military targets has brought losses to the civilian populations. It would be an even more grievous conflict if ground warfare should bring the contending forces within gunfire of the large cities, as is likely to happen unless an end is put to the fight.

At the beginning of hostilities there were relatively few Canadians in the area and I am happy to report that until now there have been no casualties among the Canadian residents or tourists present. Canadian diplomatic missions in the war area are actively concerned about the safety of Canadian residents and visitors in their areas of responsibility. The embassies maintain records of Canadian residents and endeavour to keep track of visitors to assist in maintaining contact with them in time of trouble.