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Canadians join the United Nations Middle East peacekeeping force

About 400 Canadian troops – mainly communications experts – are in the Middle East as part of Canada's contribution to the UN peacekeeping force.

In a statement to the House of Commons on November 9, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mitchell Sharp, described as follows events leading up to the departure of the Canadian contingent:

On November 1 I informed the House that it was my intention to meet with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in New York the following day to discuss with him the composition of the Emergency Force for service in the Middle East. My discussions with the Secretary-General were useful and served to clarify some of the outstanding issues. The same evening agreement was reached in the Security Council authorizing the Secretary-General to consult with potential contributors including Canada and Poland, who were to provide contingents which would have particular responsibility for the provision of logistic support. On November 5, following my return

from the United Nations, I tabled in the House the text of the Security Council agreement along with the texts of notes exchanged between the Secretary-General and our Ambassador to the United Nations.

Our Ambassador has since been holding discussions with the Secretary-General, at Mr. Waldheim's request, concerning the organization and composition of the logistics element of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). Polish representatives have also participated in these more detailed discussions. Meanwhile, evaluation teams were dispatched to Cairo to assess the requirement on the ground.

In the light of the discussions to



Canadian Forces photo

Defence Minister James Richardson (right) bids farewell to Brigadier-General D.S. Nicholson at Ottawa airport. Brigadier-General Nicholson led

an 11-man evaluation team to assess the logistics and support requirements for the United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East.