

Mr. Speaker,

Ten days ago Egyptian and Syrian troops launched heavily armoured attacks across the ceasefire lines of the Suez canal and on the Golan Heights into territories occupied by Israel since 1967, and large-scale warfare replaced an uneasy truce in the Middle East. I speak for the government and I think I speak for all members in this House when I deplore this development. Canadian sympathies go out to the people caught up in this dreadful tragedy. Canadian efforts must be directed to what can be done to stop the fighting and start the process of achieving by peaceful means a just and lasting settlement.

After these ten days of heavy fighting, with great losses in lives, the military outcome is still unclear and indeed the situation on the ground does not seem to have varied greatly from what it was at the resumption of hostilities. Egyptian forces are established in strength on the east bank of the Suez canal but their further advance into Sinai is hotly contested by Israeli forces.

On the Golan Heights, Israel has apparently recovered ground yielded initially to Syrian forces but has met strong resistance in its penetration of Syrian territory. What is clear is that the continuing fighting in the air and at sea, as well as on the ground, the steadily mounting casualties on both sides, the re-supply of destroyed arms, and finally the growing involvement of civilian population altogether give a distressing picture unrelieved by clear hopes of a cessation of hostilities.

At a time like this we look to the United Nations. As the Secretary General stated in his appeal last week:

"I am profoundly concerned with the role of the U.N. in such circumstances. The primary purpose of our organization is the maintenance of international peace and security. If we fail in that role, the central point of the organization's existence is jeopardized."

With the United Nations' Security Council apparently unable to agree on the terms of an appeal for a ceasefire, there is increasing concern that the conflict in the Middle East may have wider implications for the world at large and may indeed endanger the whole process of détente which eastern and western governments had laboriously been working at over the past few years and with which Canada has been very much concerned.

I do not intend to dwell on why the fighting resumed at this particular time. The facts are that the truce has been violently broken, a truce which never evolved as was intended towards a settlement in the intervening years since 1967. Immediately at the end of that conflict a long and difficult negotiation, in which Canada actively participated, took place in the Security Council of the United Nations, with the result that Resolution 242 was adopted unanimously. Every word of that resolution was negotiated and its delicate balance results from a protracted effort at setting out in the clearest possible terms, acceptable to the greatest possible number of states, the main points which have to be dealt with in order that there may be the beginning of a settlement to the Middle Eastern conflict which has been with us for 25 years.