

Let me describe what happens when a request is received from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as it recently was in the case of Yemen, for Canadian help in a peace-keeping operation. Because of the experience that has now been built up, the request itself will be fairly specific for the Secretary-General and his military advisers will have discussed what Canada might be able to provide with the Canadian Delegation in New York, to which is attached a military adviser. On receiving the request, a joint submission from the Minister of National Defence and myself may be made to Cabinet asking for Government approval to provide the required personnel and equipment for the operation. If Cabinet agrees, the Department of National Defence is responsible for selecting the appropriate personnel and equipment and sending them to the area concerned, while External Affairs is responsible for negotiating conditions of service, making any necessary arrangements with the country or countries to which the service personnel will be posted and providing any diplomatic assistance that may be necessary on the spot through the appropriate mission.

In United Nations peace-keeping operations policy direction is given by the Secretary-General, sometimes assisted, as in the case of the Congo, by an advisory committee representing the contributing powers. Canada is represented on the Congo Advisory Committee by the Canadian Permanent Delegation to the United Nations. In the case of the Indochina Commissions, which do not come under the United Nations, instructions regarding implementation of the cease-fire agreements are sent from External Affairs to the three Canadian Commissioners.

We have always been interested in the evolution of the various ad hoc UN operations into more permanent peace-keeping machinery, but we recognize that this is still some years away. Meanwhile, the best we can do is to be adequately prepared and sufficiently flexible to meet a UN request with the minimum of delay. In international peace-keeping, no two cases are the same, and close co-operation between civilian and military departments is the only answer. What is the same in all cases, however, is the calibre of the Canadian service personnel and the excellent job they do even under extremely difficult circumstances, as is the case in Laos and in Yemen. One of the prime reasons that Canada has been asked time and again to help in these problems is because of the high professional standards and ready adaptability of the members of the Canadian armed services, and I should like to pay my tribute to them. As the Chief of Staff has already told you, they make excellent ambassadors for Canada. Another reason for our frequent selection for this task is that by tacit consent, the great powers usually do not participate and the UN Secretary-General looks to the ranks of the broadly respected middle powers to fulfil this function.

The Commonwealth

To assist newer members of the Commonwealth in establishing a well-trained nucleus from which they can build their armed forces to guarantee their own independence, we have undertaken a certain