

*Arab-Israeli Conflict*

members where rules for administration would be pre-established and not thereafter changeable except by unanimous consent and policing decisions would be by majority vote of the trustees; and

3. UN sovereignty over the Golan Heights under the trusteeship of the United States, USSR, China, the United Kingdom, France, Syria and Israel with

(a) a right to Israel to reoccupy temporarily for a breach of neutrality or military threat;

(b) a monetary settlement to Syria from a specially established international compensation fund.

● (1700)

[English]

He said: Mr. Speaker, I should like to explain briefly the background of the drafting of this proposal for a permanent peace solution. It was drafted in the aftermath of the previous Government's ill-fated attempt to move the Canadian Embassy to Jerusalem. This position was so totally against common sense and the even-handed approach which Canada has usually taken to international questions, that I decided to draw up a list of proposals which, if common sense and goodwill were to exist on both sides of the Middle East equation, could provide a reasonable basis for a permanent solution.

The proposals were drafted in the fall of 1979 and sent to the heads of Government of the various countries involved. Most responded with varying degrees of enthusiasm and the responses were generally positive. The response from Prime Minister Barre of France was enthusiastic; the responses from the United States and Great Britain were in the tenor of, "let's wait and see what happens as a result of the Camp David accords"; from the Near East countries, apart from Jordan which showed some interest, offered polite acknowledgements, including one from Israel.

I mention the background in order to explain how, in the light of comments I have received since it was drafted, I would amend my motion somewhat if I were to redraft it now. I might also remind Hon. Members that the basic elements of this proposals are, as far as I know, in accord with Canada's official position of support for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement based on Security Council Resolution 242, as well as earlier UN resolutions relating to this issue which were supported by the Government of Canada and had the approval of all Parties in the House when the Government voted at the United Nations.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the main points and on the four minor changes which I now find necessary to make to the motion as it appears on today's Order Paper. At the outset, I refer to the creation of a sovereign strictly neutral Palestinian state. The idea was to create a state somewhat similar to the situation in Austria. The Russians decided to withdraw from their sector in Austria during the 1950s, but, according to the rules of international law, they still have the right to return to Austria if ever that country ceases to be neutral. I think that the Austrian experience might serve as an example for a final settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

I should mention as well that I am suggesting in the motion that the UN should have sovereignty over the Golan Heights. I

think that this position is unrealistic because I doubt that Syria will ever agree to that kind of settlement. Perhaps they would accept some sort of trusteeship for a number of years, long enough to restore a climate of confidence, but in the long term I believe we must eliminate for all times the possibility that Syrians might return to that territory.

Third, there is a rather significant omission in the second paragraph where I refer to UN sovereignty over Jerusalem. I failed to mention that the independent Palestinian state should, of course, be a member of that permanent trusteeship.

Mr. Speaker, I drafted the details of that motion in 1979 and it has been on the Order Paper since 1981. What did happen since I prepared my notes? There are many important events of which the public is not aware, I think.

[English]

There are a number of events which have occurred since I prepared this motion of which the public is not sufficiently aware. The question is raised as to whether there was a movement toward peace in the years following 1979. There was, and one of the most important moves toward peace came from the Palestinian side. In 1981 a truce was established along the border with Lebanon. While it did not hold perfectly, as the months wore on it progressively reduced the acts of terrorism. Toward the end of that truce there was a situation where, in the months prior to the invasion of Lebanon, the head of the Israeli Settlements Organization in the Galilee area petitioned the Israeli Government for a continuation of the cease-fire agreement because it was working so well.

● (1710)

We have found out that in the month of February or March 1982—I would not put a specific date on it, but it was at least two months before the Lebanese invasion—there was a communication from the PLO to the Israeli Cabinet which offered to the Israeli Government a non-aggression agreement all along the Lebanese frontier. This agreement was transmitted to Israel through unnamed persons in the United States, presumably the U. S. State Department. It was rejected immediately by the Begin Government, at least two months before the invasion.

This particular information was revealed by a source no less competent than Mr. Sharir, the Israeli Minister of Tourism. He tried to retract it the next day, but another Israeli Minister in the meantime confirmed what he said. The Member of Parliament in question was Mr. Beni Shalita. He confirmed that Sharir was correct and said that there was no secret, that the entire Israeli Commission on Foreign Affairs and Defence was told about the offer two months before the Lebanese war.

Then we have a further series of information coming forward which indicated that there were many other attempts to get the information through to the Begin Government and to the American Government that the PLO wanted to talk business about a full-fledged armistice, not just a ceasefire.