

(C.W.B. November 14, 1956)

settlement. We have stated our belief that this settlement should respect the legitimate sovereign rights of Egypt. It should also safeguard the right of ships of all nations to pass through the Canal. At the same time it should protect the international waterway from arbitrary and unjustified intervention by any country, including Egypt. We have stated our belief that this settlement should be embodied in co-operative arrangements with which the United Nations should be associated in an appropriate manner.

Because we believe that a permanent settlement of Israel's relations with its neighbours and of the future of the Suez Canal should be reached by peaceful negotiations under the aegis of the United Nations, the Canadian Government regrets that Israel proceeded last week to use force against Egypt, although we recognize that Israel have been subject to grave threats and provocations during the last few years. Though we recognize the vital importance of the Canal to the economic life and international responsibilities of the United Kingdom and France, we could not but regret also that, at a time when the United Nations Security Council was seized of the matter, the United Kingdom and France felt it necessary to intervene with force on their own responsibility.

Your Government has acted promptly in this crisis. We have taken immediate steps to further the safety of Canadian civilians in the Middle East. We have suspended the shipment of jet interceptor aircraft to Israel. The Canadian Government voted for consideration of the Israeli attack at the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on November 1 which was called after Security Council action was made impossible by the negative votes of two of its permanent members.

A United States resolution was introduced which called for an immediate cease-fire, the prompt withdrawal of forces and the end of military shipments to the area. On Friday morning this resolution was carried by 64 votes in favour to 5 against, including the United Kingdom and France. Canada and five other nations abstained in the vote on this resolution.

In explaining the reasons for this abstention, I should like to quote part of what Mr. Pearson said in the General Assembly:

"I regret use of military force in the circumstances which we have been discussing but I regret also that there was not more time, before a vote had to be taken, for consideration of the best way to bring about that kind of cease-fire which will have enduring and beneficial results."

He later added:

"I therefore would have liked to see a provision in this resolution....authorizing the Secretary-General to begin to make arrangements with member governments for a United Nations force large enough to keep these

borders at peace while a political settlement is being worked out."

We have swiftly followed up this suggestion. At another special session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York last night Mr. Pearson introduced a resolution on behalf of Canada which requests the Secretary-General to submit within 48 hours a plan for a United Nations force to secure and to supervise the cease-fire arrangements which were referred to in the United States resolution. Mr. Pearson explained that no members of the United Nations are to be asked to provide forces without their previous consent. The Canadian Government is ready to recommend Canadian participation in such a United Nations force if it is to be established and if it is thought that Canada could play a useful role.

The Canadian resolution was passed by the General Assembly early this morning without a single dissenting vote although there were a number of abstentions. At the same time the General Assembly passed a resolution sponsored by 19 nations; it reaffirmed the United States resolution about cease-fire arrangements and authorized the Secretary-General to arrange with the nations concerned the implementation of this resolution and asked him to report on their compliance.

The establishment of the United Nations force will be to ensure an effective cease-fire in the affected area. The governments of the United Kingdom and France have signified their willingness, under certain conditions, to suspend their military intervention if a United Nations truce force is given responsibility. According to present information, Israel and Egypt have stated their willingness to accept cease-fire arrangements provided other parties also co-operate.

We have strong reason to believe that a United Nations command will be established within the 48 hours set in the Canadian Resolution. This is only the first step toward a permanent settlement of Middle East problems. In the General Assembly last night the United States introduced two new resolutions which seek to establish United Nations committees to consider the future of Israel's relations with its neighbours and the future of the Suez Canal. We believe these resolutions represent a constructive approach to these problems. We will actively participate in efforts to make progress on the lines which the Assembly has approved.

We have spent anxious days of late and I am sure you all share our anxiety. The present crisis has strained both the Western alliance and the bonds of the Commonwealth more than any other event since the Second World War. If we can use it as the opportunity to dissipate the black cloud which has hung over the Middle East these many years, the present danger and strains may prove to have been a price worth paying.