

Middle East

The Middle East is of major concern to us at this time. My country has followed developments there with anxiety for the future of that historic area of the world and with sympathy for the thousands of innocent people who are, as always, the first victims of war. Canada has been directly involved, as you know, in the affairs of the Middle East through our membership on the Security Council and our participation in the United Nations Emergency Force and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. We are a major contributor to the programme of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Nothing illustrates better the vital contribution the United Nations has made to the area than the fact that two of these organizations continue to have an indispensable function to perform in relieving suffering and in helping to maintain a relative tranquillity.

It is clear, nevertheless, that we have failed to establish the foundations for a lasting peace. The securing of such a settlement has been Canada's abiding concern ever since 1947. We witnessed the opportunity slip away in 1949. In the early months of 1957 we emphasized again and again in this Assembly the vital importance of action to remove the causes of war. When tensions were mounting once more in the Middle East in the spring, with others we sought to have the Security Council urge restraint on the parties involved. Now, again, it is incumbent on all of us, and particularly on the permanent members of the Security Council, to make every effort to lay the basis for a long-term settlement.

Speaking at the fifth emergency special session on June 23 last, I said that in Canada's view, "the withdrawal of the Israeli forces, vital as it is, must be related to the other basic issues involved". This remains our view. These other issues include: respect for the territorial integrity of all the nations of the area, and the ending of claims to belligerency; respect for the rights of all nations to innocent passage through international waterways; justice for the refugees; and arrangements for the preservation of the special spiritual and religious interests in Jerusalem, involving, I should hope, some form of international supervision by this organization.

The first priority must be to see whether the efforts which were made at the special emergency session in July to work out a resolution combining some or all of these principles can be resumed and carried to a successful conclusion. If an agreement on principles could be reached, we should also, I think, take the advice of the Secretary-General in the introduction to his annual report and give him an appropriate authorization for the designation of a special representative to act as a much-needed channel of communication between the parties and as a reporter and interpreter of the events for this organization. But, even if it should prove impossible to reach agreement on a statement of principles, I believe that the United Nations should, nonetheless, send out to the area a special representative of the Secretary-General -- and do so without delay -- with a broad mandate to establish and maintain contacts with all sides and assist in the return of peaceful conditions. This appointment would not be a victory for any party but a genuine demonstration