



Statements and Speeches

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GUIDE-LINES FOR UN PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

A Statement in the Special Political Committee of the United Nations by Mr. Saul F. Rae, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the UN, on November 28, 1973.

On the surface, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations does not appear to have been able to record substantial progress in its work in the past year. However, the work of the Committee, particularly in the less-formal deliberations of its Working Group, has served to clarify the issues and assist in a sustained search for workable guide-lines for UN peacekeeping operations. The recent decisions of the Security Council concerning the establishment of a United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East have, in a dramatic way, illuminated several of the basic issues that have been the subject of close attention and discussion in the Special Committee. Events of the last few weeks may similarly have contributed to the clarification of these issues, and of the attitudes of states. At the same time, however, we must recognize that, in the case of the second UNEF as in the case of the first, and even with the long and varied United Nations experience in peace-keeping and peace-observing, the administrative mechanisms and accepted procedures available for this purpose require strengthening. The objectives of the Special Committee — to codify the principles that should govern peace-keeping and to develop the required institutions and methods to implement peacekeeping decisions promptly and effectively — remain as valid as ever.

The continuing importance of peace-keeping as a UN instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security was underlined by the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, in his statement to the General Assembly on September 25. He said the following: "Canada remains prepared to play its part in peace-keeping and peace-observation. But we have learned a lesson from our long and frustrating attempts to have these peace-keeping bodies operate objectively. The lesson is this — peace-keeping and peace-observation operations stand the best chance of success if they are conducted under the authority of the United Nations Security Council."

In this regard, we were most interested in the statement of the United States Secretary of State before the General Assembly on September 24 that the United States was prepared to consider how the Security Council could play a more central role in the conduct of peacekeeping operations.

It would appear that a consensus on some aspects of authorization and control of peacekeeping operations may have begun to emerge from the recent decision of the Security Council on UNEF. One cannot touch on this aspect without paying tribute to the Secretary-General, who has contributed in an important way to the development of principles and guide-lines that should govern peacekeeping operations in his first report to the Security Council on the setting-up of the UNEF, which was approved, with modifications, by the Council on October 27, 1973 (Document S/11052/REV 1). This document, like Mr. Hammarskjold's first and second reports on the setting-up of the first UNEF in 1956, will no doubt take its place amongst the primary sources of background documentation and experience for the future study and elaboration of peacekeeping guide-lines.

The Secretary-General has been entrusted with heavy responsibilities with respect to the actual setting-up of the Force. He and his staff have once again had to improvise and to solve new problems as they presented themselves. My delegation has been consulting and working closely with the Secretariat in relation to the Secretary-General's request to Canada to despatch a Canadian contingent for logistic support of the Force, in close co-operation with Poland. In this close association, we have had the highest admiration for the manner in which he and his senior associates in the Secretariat are discharging their most difficult assignment, with energy and devotion.

In the case of the new UNEF, there has been greater co-operation between members of the Security Council than ever before. This was made possible, in part, by policies of *détente* and the dialogue that has been pursued by permanent members of the Security Council and, in part, by the constructive efforts of all its members to find workable solutions. The United Nations Charter embodies the essential conception of the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. After a long period, we are witnessing movement towards this conception, to the point where the permanent members, conscious of the expectations of the international community and of each other's interests, and in the face of a threat to international peace and security, have been able to work together in the Council, or at least to refrain from exercising their right of veto. The willingness of the Security Council, and particularly of its permanent members, to accommodate and harmonize their positions for the broader benefit of the parties to the dispute, and of the international community, is, we hope, not a fortuitous occurrence but a new beginning.

There have in the past been protracted disagreements over the methods of operation and financing of peacekeeping missions. This has also led to considerable disruption in the activities of the UN and has placed the organization in an unsatisfactory financial situation from which it has not yet fully recovered. While we have had on this occasion to devise a special scale of assessments to defray the cost of UNEF, my Government believes that the regular scale of assessments, which adequately reflects the special responsibilities and duties of the permanent members of the Security Council and the capacity to pay of all the members of the UN, should normally apply to peacekeeping operations. In Canada's view, members should seize the present opportunity and the new mood within the Security Council and the General Assembly to examine how the methods for the financing of other peacekeeping operations, such as UNFICYP, might be reviewed in order to put them on a firmer and more equitable footing.

Another important element brought out by the recent decisions of the Security Council was that the composition of UNEF should be balanced in terms of equitable geographic distribution. This has the essential advantage of ensuring that the Force being authorized will enjoy a broad basis of support and participation through its international character. In this way, a growing number of UN members will obtain firsthand experience of the problems of peace-keeping. Wider participation from all regional groups can strengthen the operation, and strengthen the political consensus on which it must be based. At the same time, great care should be taken to ensure that the conception of balance is applied in each case with a sense of the practical and the efficient. The conception of balance does not imply a process of arbitrary head-counting; it must be interpreted with measure as one of a number of guide-lines. To apply it rigidly could make the task of the Secretary-General in setting up a peacekeeping force or a peace-observing mission a most difficult one, and render such operations unwieldy and inefficient. Balance in composition is important, but it will be no less important to the future viability of UN peacekeeping operations that they be carried out in an effective and efficient manner. Canada, for its part, will agree to participate in a peacekeeping or peace-observing force only if satisfied that we would have a clearly-defined functional role to play, and if our participation is acceptable to all parties concerned.

Mr. Chairman, another important element in the mandate the Security Council gave to the Secretary-General was the decision, reflected in Resolution 340 of October 25, that UNEF should be composed of personnel drawn from states members of the UN except the permanent

members of the Council. With diverging interests of some of the permanent members in the Middle East conflict, we welcome the restraint shown in the present instance, without accepting this as a precedent to be applied for all time and in all cases.

The Security Council has from the outset emphasized the importance of negotiations between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East. There is a strongly-expressed intention to link peace-keeping with peace-making. To my Government, this link is one of the important elements that went into our decision to participate in the present UNEF. The initial time-limit of six months that has been given to UNEF by the Security Council may not, in practice, be sufficient to enable it to fulfill its mandate. This mandate must be kept under close review in relation to any progress that, one hopes, can be made in the reduction of tensions and movement towards definitive settlement.

The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations may now be well placed to intensify its efforts to achieve agreed guide-lines for carrying out peacekeeping operations. In its resumed work, it will be timely to review, in the light of recent UNEF experience, the manner in which the Committee is examining the responsibilities to be exercised directly by the Security Council in the prompt establishment, direction and control of peacekeeping operations. A further approach would be to proceed along lines already developed by the Committee in its work this year — namely, to examine in detail respective responsibilities for peacekeeping operations of each of the major UN organs involved. Some fundamental differences on the respective roles these would play, and on the best way of maintaining a satisfactory balance between them, still exist. We shall have to grapple with such differences.

It was in an effort to stimulate new ideas and new approaches towards an accommodation of diverse positions that my delegation tabled its working paper a year ago (A/SPC/152 of October 10, 1972). Our proposals envisaged a system of shared responsibility between the Military Staff Committee of the Security Council and an international headquarters staff operating under the Secretary-General, which would constitute a pool of expertise in peacekeeping planning and the day-to-day conduct of peacekeeping missions. We continue to believe that the ideas contained in these proposals offer a practical solution to the problems of command, control and operation of peacekeeping forces, and a viable bridge between previously-established positions on these complex and difficult issues.

At the same time, we have studied carefully and with great interest the contributions and suggestions that have been provided by a number of other countries. We see particular merit in this respect in the recent memorandum (A/9144, dated 7 September 1973) put forward by the British Government. It suggests an imaginative procedural formula indicating possible solutions to the main problems of decision-taking in terms of Article 27, Paragraph 3, of the Charter.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I trust that my remarks will leave no doubt as to my delegation's conviction that the Special Committee retains an important role to play. The most recent UN peace-keeping operation — the second UNEF — has abundantly demonstrated the need for continued progress. It has put in high relief the relevance of the Committee's aims, and it should lend a renewed sense of urgency to its work.