

STATEMENT DISCOURS

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AFFAIRS.

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EXTÉRIEURES.



Statement by the Secretary of State
for External Affairs the Honourable
Mitchell Sharp in the House of
Commons - October 22, 1973

SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE-EAST

We warmly welcome the call for a cease-fire by the Security Council jointly sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union. We hope that it will be formally accepted by all parties to the conflict and put into effect as quickly as possible. The position taken by the Canadian Government from the beginning of the recent outbreak of fighting was that there should be a cease-fire linked with negotiations as soon as possible. We have also urged the United States and the USSR, as the major suppliers of arms, to use their influence toward the achievement of a cease-fire followed by negotiations on the basis of Resolution 242.

The linkage with negotiations is in our view vitally important. It is not clear at this point what auspices will be considered appropriate by the parties for the negotiations that are envisaged to take place immediately and concurrently with the cease-fire. We have suggested that the machinery of the United Nations should be made use of. However, if there are possibilities of negotiations under the auspices of the great powers, we would certainly not wish to oppose this or any other method of bringing the parties together.

Since the cease-fire is to take place in the positions that the forces now occupy, there will likely be a useful role for UNTSO in helping to implement the cease-fire. It may be that UNTSO will need to be expanded to improve its capability for this purpose. The Canadian Government would look sympathetically at any request from the Secretary-General for additional Canadian officers for UNTSO.

If the process of negotiations does get under way, and we emphasize most strongly that it must, then there may be a need for some peacekeeping force in addition to the cease-fire observation function discharged by UNTSO. As I have said before, we are prepared to consider participation in such a force if we are requested by the parties concerned and if we are satisfied we can play a useful role. This could be a very different force from UNEF (United Nations Emergency Force).

In 1956, one of the objectives was to remove the danger of a confrontation between great powers. This time, fortunately, the two super-powers have come together on a joint proposal for a cease-fire and it may be, therefore, that in this encouraging climate of détente there may be a place in the peacekeeping operation for forces supplied by the great powers. We will follow closely developments at the United Nations and consult with other governments on the situation.