



# Statements and Speeches

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## CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCY FORCE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, in the House of Commons, on November 14, 1973.

An uneasy cease-fire now prevails on the Middle Eastern battlefield, which for 15 days, from October 6 to October 22, and again until October 26, witnessed the most furious and bloody fighting in that beleaguered area in modern times. The most sophisticated and destructive equipment was unleashed in the Sinai desert and on the Golan plateau. The biggest tank battles since the Second World War raged on the ground, while dozens of aircraft were struck down from the skies every day, and in the surrounding waters several naval encounters took place near the harbours of the Eastern Mediterranean. Peaceful navigation and trade were interrupted to the point where even some of the governments of that oil-rich region were forced to ration gasoline. Casualties mounted rapidly, and even now we are uncertain as to their extent, although the total must be unbearably high, especially in relation to the results achieved.

The mounting fury of the fight was possibly the only reason why it so abruptly ceased. The great powers who were supplying arms in increasing quantity to each side fortunately realized that they were being drawn into a dangerous confrontation, with the Soviet Union talking of unilateral intervention on the scene, while the United States placed its own forces on an increased state of alert. It was at this crucial stage that the United Nations Security Council agreed to the establishment and dispatch of an emergency force to supervise a cease-fire and separate efforts to prevent a recurrence of the fighting.

Given the circumstances as I have just recalled them, there could be no doubt in anyone's mind that never had an emergency measure of this nature been so evidently and urgently necessary. While Canada did not seek participation in the emergency force, we were determined that, once we were invited, it would be a success, and I am sure this is a point of view that would be supported by all parties in the House. We were asked at an early stage by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to contribute in a vitally important role. Just two and a half hours ago the Secretary-General of the United Nations was on the telephone to me urging the importance of Canada's participation and urging our participation

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in certain of these vital functions upon which the whole of UNEF depends.

After due consideration, the Government decided to accept the request and communicated this decision to Parliament. In accordance with the practice followed in the past when a Canadian contingent has been contributed to a peacekeeping force, as opposed to the sending of peace observers, we are asking Parliament to approve the Government's decision. Leaders of all parties represented here indicated, in response to my announcement of October 30, that they supported a Canadian contribution to peacekeeping under the United Nations in the Middle East if it appeared there was a useful role for us to play. Spokesmen for all parties took the same view as I did, that no one could say no to such a request.

The conception of peacekeeping or peace-observation forces under the United Nations, which owes so much of its development to a great Canadian, our former Prime Minister and a Member of this House, the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, is firmly supported by this Government, as it has been by previous Canadian Governments of all political stripes. We did not, however, accept the call to join a new UNEF without careful consideration. Experience over the years, some of it rather disappointing, has led us to look for certain criteria that, in our judgment, should be met if a peacekeeping operation is to be effective and if Canadian participation in it is to be worth while. We have no illusions that, in this imperfect world, the criteria for an ideal peacekeeping operation will ever be met in full. These criteria must, however, be constantly reiterated and promoted if peace-keeping is to be made a more effective instrument rather than a source of disillusionment to a world community hungry for peace.

The criteria Canada seeks to apply when considering participation in a peacekeeping operation include certain points of a political nature, as well as others of a more technical kind. A fundamental point is the existence of a threat to international peace and security. There is no doubt of that in this case. Ideally, peacekeeping should be directly linked to agreement on a political settlement among the parties to the conflict. At least there should be reasonable expectations that the parties will negotiate a settlement. The peacekeeping force must be responsible to a political authority, and preferably that authority should be the United Nations. The sponsoring authority should receive reports and have adequate power to supervise the mandate of the force. The parties to the conflict must accept the peacekeeping force and Canadian participation in it must be acceptable to all concerned.

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Further considerations are that the peacekeeping force must have a clear mandate, including such things as freedom of movement, and that there must be an agreed and equitable method of financing the operation.

Some of these criteria were not met when we participated in the International Commission in Viet-Nam, or in Cyprus in 1964, or in the UNEF of 1956. After our departure from Viet-Nam, I made it clear that certain features of the operation made it impossible for the Commission to operate effectively. One major impediment was the absence of a political authority to which it could report.

The United Nations may not be the only possible sponsoring body, but we have not yet found better auspices under which to work at peace-keeping. It is, therefore, a matter of satisfaction that in the Middle Eastern situation the emergency force should be put under the authority of the UN. To be precise, it is under the command of the United Nations, vested in the Secretary-General, and under the authority of the Security Council.

In 1964, the House debated the dispatch of a Canadian contingent to Cyprus under great pressure of time and in circumstances that did not allow for the application of rigorous conditions. The island was on the brink of civil war, with intervention threatened from neighbouring countries, and peacekeeping troops had to be sent as quickly as possible. For nine years, the United Nations force in Cyprus has kept conflict from breaking out and it must therefore be counted, to that extent, as a success. It has not, however, led to a settlement of the underlying problems. The absence of a direct link between a peacekeeping force and a negotiated settlement is a weakness, perhaps an unavoidable one, in the Cyprus situation.

Another weakness of the Cyprus peacekeeping operation is the absence of equitable financial arrangements. This time we are determined that the treatment accorded Canada should be equivalent to that accorded to other contributing countries. The Secretary-General has stated that his preliminary estimates of the United Nations own direct costs for UNEF, based upon past experience and practice, are \$30 million for the six-month period authorized by the Security Council. These costs are to be considered expenses of the United Nations organizations and are to be borne by the members of the United Nations as apportioned by the General Assembly, presumably in about the same proportions as each country's share in the United Nations annual budget. Canada's share of that budget is currently 3.08 per cent. I might point out to the House that, even if we did not participate in this peacekeeping operation, we should, of course, still pay our share of the peacekeeping costs.

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It is worth recalling that Canadians have been participating for many years in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in the Middle East, and that UNTSO continues to exist and to perform a useful role on the ceasefire lines. Our previous experience in the Middle East in 1956, which was the first major United Nations venture in peace-keeping, is naturally very much in our minds at this time. Sadly, we seem to be back where we were 17 years ago. In fact, the request to Canada to participate in the 1973 UNEF is due in great part to the fact that we have special skills and experience, not only in peace-keeping generally but in peace-keeping in the Middle East, and in the role that is now assigned to our contingent....

The original request from the Secretary-General for Canadian participation on October 27 was in terms of Canada supplying the logistic component of the force. That role has been assigned to us precisely because of the effective way in which Canada discharged it from 1956 to 1967, and the skills that our troops demonstrated in doing their job. Two aspects of our previous experience are relevant to the new task assigned to Canada in the same area. First, the way in which UNEF had to terminate its peacekeeping function in 1967 and evacuate the Middle East gave rise to a great deal of discussion, both at the United Nations and in Canada. From that unhappy episode certain lessons have been drawn.

There is no point in participating in a peacekeeping operation unless our participation is acceptable to all, and especially to the sovereign state upon whose soil the force is to be deployed. I can assure the House that we did not accept this task until the Secretary-General had given us formal assurance that the presence of a Canadian contingent would be acceptable to all parties, and especially to Egypt, since UNEF will be deployed on Egyptian territory. In addition, I confirmed the Egyptian agreement personally with the Foreign Minister of Egypt when I met him a few days ago in Washington.

Part of the difficulty encountered with the original UNEF in 1956 was that it did not come under the authority of the Security Council and did not have the unqualified backing of the great powers. Nor was the mandate of the force so clearly set out and accepted by the parties concerned. The first UNEF in the Middle East was a brilliant improvisation that brought the international community back from the edge of disaster but could not ensure peace. This time the super-powers jointly proposed a peacekeeping force, and all members of the Security Council, except China, approved.

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The Secretary-General, in his report to the Security Council on October 26, 1973, set out as essential conditions that the force must have at all times the full confidence and backing of the Security Council, and that it must operate with the full co-operation of the parties concerned. This report was approved by the Security Council and we felt more assured that the 1973 UNEF was to be on a sounder basis than that of 1956. It is on that basis that we acceded to the Secretary-General's request of October 27 and accepted our assignment on the force.

Subsequently, an argument developed in the Security Council about having representation in UNEF of various geographical and political groupings. We can understand the desirability of having representation of various geographical areas in a UN force. However, Canada does not view its participation in UNEF in terms of political representation but in terms of performing an essential function. When I have been asked from time to time shouldn't there be a representative of the Warsaw Pact as well as a representative of NATO, of which Canada is a member, I have said that we do not consider ourselves as acting in the capacity of representing anyone but the international community as a whole.

In any event, the Security Council decided that the logistic role should be shared between Canada and Poland. I have made it clear that there is no objection on our part to working with Poland, provided a clear and practical division of responsibilities can be worked out. Our concern is with the efficient operation of the logistics component. It is unfortunate that the debate in the Security Council delayed the dispatch of logistical support units by a full week and threw some confusion on the Canadian role in UNEF. Following the Security Council's agreement of November authorizing the Secretary-General to consult with potential contributors, including Canada and Poland, our Ambassador to the United Nations continued discussions with officials from the UN Secretariat and Poland on the organization and composition of the logistics element.

At the same time, at the request of the Secretary-General, evaluation teams were dispatched to Cairo to assess the requirements on the ground. As a result of these discussions, the Secretary-General requested, and we agreed, that, as the first phase in the deployment of a Canadian contingent, Canada would provide a signals unit to provide communications for the force. Poland will be dispatching an engineer unit as the first element in its contribution.

The Secretary-General is continuing his discussions with both Canada and Poland to determine the next phase of the logistics

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deployment, and in particular the allocation of functions between the two countries. In these discussions we have sought to consider in a constructive manner proposals put forward by the Secretary-General, while having in mind the need to ensure that Canada will be able to provide a useful and effective contribution to the operation of the force. At the moment, the Government is giving active consideration to a proposal from the Secretary-General that Canada provide an air unit. A request has been made to Poland to provide a field-hospital unit. In addition, the Secretary-General has made suggestions regarding the division of responsibilities between Canada and Poland with respect to the remaining logistic functions. The discussions have been complex and time-consuming, but I am hopeful that we may be in a position to announce shortly the details of the composition of the remainder of the Canadian contingent.

While these negotiations continue, the advance party of the Canadian signals unit arrived in Cairo on November 10. The deployment of the unit should be completed shortly and will number over 400 persons. This unit is being dispatched according to the schedule determined by the Secretary-General. He wanted an advance party of the unit on the ground as soon as possible because of the urgent requirements for an effective communications system within UNEF.

Another point demonstrated by the history of UNEF from 1956 to 1967 is that a peacekeeping force of this kind should be recognized by all parties as a temporary necessity, to help avoid a renewal of fighting while the parties to the conflict take up the fundamental problem that has led them to fight each other in the first place. It is precisely because the parties involved made no progress toward a peaceful settlement in the ten years following 1956 that ultimately UNEF had to depart without any other prospect than renewed warfare. With this in mind, I stressed on October 22 that, while we warmly welcomed the call for a cease-fire, it was vitally important, in our view, that the cease-fire should lead quickly to negotiations on the basic problems of the Middle East.

There is now a renewed opportunity for the parties involved to employ the respite that UNEF provides to tackle their basic differences. The principles of a just and lasting settlement have been set out since 1967 in Security Council Resolution 242, but until now no progress has been made in implementing that resolution and no negotiations based on its principles have taken place. Resolution 338 of October 22, 1973, which is the basis for the present cease-fire, also deals with the problem of a peaceful settlement. It calls for an immediate beginning to the implementation of Resolution 242 in all its parts and for the beginning of negotiation between the parties under appropriate auspices.

UNEF is not charged with the basic problems involved in a Middle East settlement. Its tasks are limited to supervising the implementation of the cease-fire, the return of the parties to their October 22 positions and the use of its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of fighting. These will be the tests of UNEF and they will be acid tests. Should the parties to the recent conflict fail to comply with the Security Council resolutions and not allow UNEF to operate effectively, the gleam of hope that the cease-fire and Resolution 338 offer will be threatened with quick extinction. Let us pray that the parties involved will therefore quickly agree to comply with these first steps on the road toward peace.

There is no question that Canadians are desirous of a lasting peace and a lasting settlement in the Middle East and, while it may not be the task of UNEF to promote this settlement, it is still the responsibility of every member of the United Nations to do what it can to help bring about this peace and this settlement. In my statement of October 16, I emphasized that parties to the conflict would first have to agree on the basis of a settlement and terms of reference for such a force for Canada to accept participation in peace-keeping.

Both the Hon. Member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) and the hon. Member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) stressed that our participation could only be undertaken with the consent of the immediate parties involved, and I have dwelt on our efforts to ensure this. I would add that the consent of the parties must be not only to accept the members of the peacekeeping force but also to facilitate its work by complying with the resolution that gave it birth. By their compliance with the Security Council resolutions, the parties will make our task worth while.

There is encouragement in the fact that, for the first time in some 20 years, Israeli and Egyptian generals have met and signed an agreement on some urgent problems of the ceasefire situation. The Governments of Egypt and of Israel displayed wisdom in accepting these arrangements, and I am sure that I speak for all the House when I say that the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Kissinger, deserves high commendation for the effectiveness of his good offices.

We can only hope that these immediate arrangements will lead to further discussions and further agreement.

As I have said, the framework for peace exists in the resolutions adopted by the Security Council. The problem, in our view, has never been so much one of interpretation as of implementation of

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these resolutions. I further indicated in the House last week, in reply to a question, that, in our view, such provisions of Resolution 242...as those calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories and the establishment of secure and recognized boundaries for all states in the region had to be taken together. Naturally, such matters as the drawing of boundaries may prove to be a long task, but is it beyond our imagination to devise means of starting the implementation of the various provisions simultaneously?

The so-called Rogers Plan in 1970 provided for partial implementation of Resolution 242, by a simultaneous reopening of the Suez Canal to navigation and a withdrawal by Israeli forces from the east bank of the canal. While that plan failed, the idea of balance is still a valid one. In fact, the whole basis of Resolution 242 is a balance of obligations and commitments. The problem of Palestinian refugees is one of the items in that balance. The resolution affirms the necessity "for achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem", and this problem should be at least broached simultaneously with the other matters I have mentioned. Canada has not forgotten these refugees. We are the third-largest contributor to the United Nations agency which looks after their needs and we have just increased by \$550,000 our contribution for the current year.

The main thing now is quickly to get around to negotiating "under appropriate auspices" as Security Council Resolution 338 has it. To us, it would seem that the United Nations offers appropriate auspices. Others have mentioned the great powers, or some of them. We should hope that they would exert their influence to stimulate the parties to begin negotiations. To the Canadian Government any auspices would seem appropriate that provide a means whereby talks can begin on the essential aspects of the problem.

For more than 25 years, the United Nations has played the role of mediator, peace-keeper and truce-supervisor in the Middle East. We cannot yet be sure that peace is any closer now than in 1948, 1956 or 1967. Once more, the parties in conflict are calling upon the United Nations to step in and give them time -- time that can be used to negotiate for peace or to prepare for war. The Canadian Government, in agreeing to contribute its part to the UN peace effort, is not taking on this commitment in a spirit of blind optimism. We have had too long an experience in this field, the United Nations has had too long an experience in trying to find a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, for anyone to be afflicted with that particular defect. We consider that we have a responsibility to the world community and to all the people of the



Middle East to do what we can to give them another chance to achieve a peaceful settlement when the fighting has stopped. That is the purpose of UNEF, and the reason for our participating in it. In putting forward this resolution, therefore, I am asking the House to agree that Canada should do its international duty.

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