CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(EIGHTEENTH SESSION)

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STATEMENT BY THE CANADIAN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, H.E. MR. PAUL TREMBLAY IN THE FIFTH COMMITTEE ON DECEMBER 6, 1963, DURING DEBATE ON ITEM 19(b): UNEF COST ESTIMATES

Mr. Chairman,

I should like to preface my remarks by an expression of gratitude, which I am certain is shared by all other delegations, for the Secretary-General's efforts in response to the proposal made by the Swedish representative at our 1019th meeting. As a result, we now have before us a comprehensive report (Document A/C.5/1001) on possible ways of redefining and limiting the functions of UNEF with a view to reducing its size and cost, without unduly increasing the risk of a resumption of warfare along the line. This report and the report of the Advisory Committee (Document A/5642 ) provide the relevant information required to reach a decision on the question of UNEF financing in 1964.

This question is similar to that which has taken so much of our time in the past; the adoption of an equitable method of sharing the costs of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We have long since settled the question of whether the cost of United Nations peacekeeping operations are the collective responsibility of all Member States. This was done at the seventeenth session when the Assembly adopted Resolution 1854 (XVII) accepting the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the financial obligations of Members. Furthermore, at the fourth special session the

Assembly firmly embodied this principle in Resolution 1874(S-IV), which contained a clear affirmation of the principle of collective responsibility and other principles to be used as guidelines in apportioning the costs of peacekeeping operations involving heavy expenditures that may be initiated in the future. I need hardly mention that both these Resolutions were adopted by very large majorities. For these reasons the question of the collective responsibility of Members for financing United Nations peacekeeping operations is no longer in doubt.

Furthermore, there is no question of whether UNEF remains necessary as a means of ensuring peace and stability in the Middle East. The Secretary-General has clearly stated in his report that he believes UNEF is "clearly indispensable at the present time to the maintenance of quiet along the Gaza-Sinai line". In addition, the Secretary-General stated in paragraph 3 that UNEF has been remarkably successful in achieving its task and therefore is considered to be essential to the peace and prosperity of the area. My Delegation completely shares the Secretary-General's view on these matters.

I should like to comment briefly on the point raised by the Secretary-General when he mentioned that UNEF was essential to the peace and prosperity of the area. In doing so the Secretary-General has quite properly drawn our attention to the important relationship between peace and prosperity. There is little hope of achieving prosperity without peace. The primacy of peace in this relationship is reflected in Article I of the Charter which states, in part,

that the primary task of the United Nations is maintenance of international peace and security through effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace.

I believe there is general agreement on the necessity of maintaining UNEF in 1964 and on the collective responsibility which all Members share for its maintenance; our task within the short period of time which remains at this session is to agree upon some equitable method of sharing the costs of the operation during the coming year.

This problem has a long history, not only in this Committee but also in the Working Groups of 15 and 21 on the examination of administrative and budgetary procedures. These groups made a real effort to come to grips with the basic issues involved in this problem and to reach general agreement on how the organization could be assured of the funds it requires to meet its primary responsibilities. The Working Group of 21 has made considerable progress in isolating the main problem and in suggesting methods for its solution. However, some major issues have yet to be resolved and the Group will therefore continue to meet in 1964.

Pending the development of long-term financing arrangements for duly approved peacekeeping operations involving heavy expenditures, the Assembly found it necessary last June and again this October to adopt ad hoc financing methods for UNEF and ONUC. These ad hoc arrangements are contained in Resolutions 1875, 1876, and 1885, and represent an effort by the Assembly to agree on interim measures which could be employed without prejudice to the efforts of the Working Group to formulate long-term arrangements.

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Canada, for its part, intends to make an all-out effort at the next sessions of the Working Group to obtain agreement on proposals for long-term arrangements based on the principle of a special scale of assessments binding on all Member States. In the meantime, however, stop-gap action is required to deal with the immediate needs of UNEF.

Last June we all accepted the general principle that the economically less developed nations have a relatively limited capacity to contribute to peacekeeping operations involving heavy expenditures, but the fact is that there is no agreement as to how much consideration should be given to this factor in dealing with the specific problem now facing us. We could conduct all over again the debate we had last June, and some of our friends have advised us that this is in fact what should be done.

My own Delegation, for one, believes that the June formula imposes an unduly large share of the burden on the developed countries. When the contribution of a large number of Member States is reduced to token amounts, the principle of collective responsibility loses its meaning. If the financial obligations of the developing countries gradually come to assume token proportions, more reliance would have to be placed on the voluntary contributions from a limited number of states. Consequently the principle of collective responsibility would be seriously weakened. This would be unfortunate since the small and medium sized states would have a proportionately smaller voice in the establishment, direction and financing of peacekeeping operations.

Notwithstanding what I have just said, my Government, together with the Governments of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, all of whom have forces serving in UNEF, came to the conclusion that in view of the importance of the issues

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involved and the short time available, we should put forward for the consideration of the Committee the proposal that we use once more the ad hoc compromise adopted last June.

As I have said, our basic objective in following this formula is to enable the Assembly to quickly proceed with the adoption of financing arrangements for 1964 without committing any delegation to a position inconsistent with its views on what represents an equitable long-term arrangement. We cosponsors believe that the present formula is acceptable as an ad hoc arrangement for 1964. But we do not believe it provides a suitable basis for a long-term approach.

Mr. Chairman, it was our hope that all governments supplying forces to UNEF would join us in cosponsoring the draft resolution /contained in Document A/C.5/L.818/. We understand and respect the reasons that have made it impossible for some of them to do so but we are sure that, even though they may have reservations on the formula contained in the resolution, they will join us in asserting the need for maintaining this vital operation. Whatever the outcome of our debate we sincerely hope that all Member States will be guided by the desire to reaffirm the collective responsibility which we all share for ensuring that the United Nations is capable of fulfilling its paramount task - the maintenance of international peace and security, wherever and whenever necessary.