

Erratum

The introduction to Mr. Pearson's statement of November 2 should read as follows:

A statement made on November 2 at an Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly by the Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, Mr. L.B. Pearson. The statement was made in explanation of Canada's vote on a resolution, adopted by the Assembly, calling on all parties involved in hostilities to agree to an immediate cease-fire and to halt the movement of military forces and arms into the area.

Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly by the Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, Mr. L.B. Pearson. The statement was made in explanation of Canada's vote on all parties involved in hostilities to agree to an immediate cease-fire and to halt the movement of military forces and arms into the area.

I rise not to take part in this debate, because the debate is over. The vote has been taken. But I do wish to explain the abstention of my delegation on that vote.

It is never easy to explain an abstention, and in this case it is particularly difficult because we are in favour of some parts of this resolution, and also because this resolution deals with such a complicated question.

Because we are in favour of some parts of the resolution, we could not vote against it, especially as, in our opinion, it is a moderate proposal couched in reasonable and objective terms, without unfair or unbalanced condemnation; and also, by referring to violations by both sides to the armistice agreements, it puts, I think, recent action by the United Kingdom and France -- and rightly -- against the background of those repeated violations and provocations.

We support the effort being made to bring the fighting to an end. We support it, among other reasons, because we regret that force was used in the circumstances that face us at this time. As my delegation sees it, however, this resolution which the General Assembly has thus adopted in its present form -- and there was very little chance to alter that form --- is inadequate to achieve the purpose which we have in mind at this Assembly. These purposes are defined in that resolution of the United Nations under which we are meeting -- resolution 377(V), uniting for peace -- and peace is far more than ceasing to fire, although it certainly must include that essential factor. This is the first time that action has been taken under the "Uniting for Peace" resolution, and I confess to a feeling of sadness, indeed



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
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MIDDLE EAST

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even distress, at not being able to support the position taken by two countries whose ties with my country are and will remain close and intimate; two countries which have contributed so much to man's progress and freedom under law; and two countries which are Canada's mother countries.

I regret the use of military force in the circumstances which we have been discussing, but I regret also that there was not more time, before a vote had to be taken, for consideration of the best way to bring about that kind of cease-fire which would have enduring and beneficial results. I think that we were entitled to that time, for this is not only a tragic moment for the countries and peoples immediately affected, but it is an equally difficult time for the United Nations itself. I know, of course, that the situation is of special and, indeed, poignant urgency, a human urgency, and that action could not be postponed by dragging out a discussion, as has been done so often in this Assembly. I do feel, however, that had that time, which has always, to my knowledge, in the past been permitted for adequate examination of even the most critical and urgent resolution, been available on this occasion, the result might have been a better resolution. Such a short delay would not, I think, have done harm, but, in the long run, would have helped those in the area who need help most at this time.

Why do I say this? In the first place, our resolution, though it has been adopted, is only a recommendation, and its moral effects would have been greater if it could have received a more unanimous vote in this Assembly -- which might have been possible if there had been somewhat more delay.

Secondly, this recommendation which we have adopted cannot be effective without the compliance of those to whom it is addressed and who have to carry it out. I had ventured to hope that, by a short delay and in informal talks, we might have made some headway, or at least have tried to make some headway, in securing a favourable response, before the vote was taken, from those governments and delegations which will be responsible for carrying it out.

I consider that there is one great omission from this resolution, which has already been pointed out by previous speakers -- more particularly by the representative of New Zealand, who has preceded me. This resolution does provide for a cease-fire, and I admit that that is of first importance and urgency. But, alongside a cease-fire and a withdrawal of troops, it does not provide for any steps to be taken by the United Nations for a peace settlement, without which a cease-fire will be only of temporary value at best. Surely, we should have used this opportunity to link a cease-fire to the absolute necessity of a political settlement in Palestine and for the Suez, and perhaps we might also have been able to recommend a procedure by which this absolutely essential process might begin.

Today we are facing a feeling of almost despairing crisis for the United Nations and for peace. Surely that feeling might have been harnessed to action or at least to a formal resolve to act at long last and to do something effective about the underlying causes of this crisis which has brought us to the very edge of a tragedy even greater than that which has already taken place. We should then, I think have recognized the necessity for political settlement in this resolution and done something about it. And I do not think that, if we had done that, it would have postponed action very long on the other clauses of the resolution. Without such a settlement, which we might have pushed forward under the incentive of fear, our resolution, as I see it, may not make for an enduring and real peace. We need action, then, not only to end the fighting but to make the peace.

I believe that there is another omission from this resolution, to which attention has also already been directed. The armed forces of Israel and of Egypt are to withdraw, or if you like, to return to the armistice lines, where presumably, if this is done, they will once again face each other in fear and hatred. What then? What then, six months from now? Are we to go through all this again? Are we to return to the statue quo? Such a return would not be to a position of security or even a tolerable position, but would be a return to terror, bloodshed, strife, incidents, charges and counter-charges, and ultimately another explosion which the United Nations armistice commission would be powerless to prevent and possibly even to investigate.

I therefore would have liked to see a provision in this resolution -- and this has been mentioned by previous speakers -- authorising the Secretary-General to begin to make arrangements with member governments for a United Nations force large enough to keep these borders at peace while a political settlement is being worked out. I regret exceedingly that time has not been given to follow up this idea, which was mentioned also by the representative of the United Kingdom in his first speech, and I hope that even now, when action on the resolution has been completed, it may not be too late to give consideration to this matter. My own government would be glad to recommend Canadian participation in such a United Nations force, a truly international peace and police force.

We have a duty here. We also -- or, should I say, we had -- and opportunity. Our resolution may deal with one aspect of our duty -- an urgent, a terribly urgent, aspect. But, as I see it, it does nothing to seize that opportunity which, if it had been seized, might have brought some real peace and a decent existence, or hope for such, to the people of that part of the world. There was no time on this occasion for us to seize this opportunity in this resolution. My delegation therefore felt,

because of the inadequacy of the resolution in this respect, that we had no alternative in the circumstances but to abstain in the voting.

I hope that our inability to deal with those essential matters at this time will very soon be removed and that we can come to grips with the basic core of this problem.

s/c