

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# STATEMENT DISCOURS

SECRETARY  
OF STATE  
FOR EXTERNAL  
AFFAIRS.

SECRÉTAIRE  
D'ÉTAT AUX  
AFFAIRES  
EXTÉRIEURES.



STATEMENT MADE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, THE HONOURABLE  
MITCHELL SHARP, DURING THE HOUSE OF  
COMMONS' DEBATE ON THE MIDDLE EAST,  
OCTOBER 16, 1973

---

Mr. Speaker,

Ten days ago Egyptian and Syrian troops launched heavily armoured attacks across the ceasefire lines of the Suez canal and on the Golan Heights into territories occupied by Israel since 1967, and large-scale warfare replaced an uneasy truce in the Middle East. I speak for the government and I think I speak for all members in this House when I deplore this development. Canadian sympathies go out to the people caught up in this dreadful tragedy. Canadian efforts must be directed to what can be done to stop the fighting and start the process of achieving by peaceful means a just and lasting settlement.

After these ten days of heavy fighting, with great losses in lives, the military outcome is still unclear and indeed the situation on the ground does not seem to have varied greatly from what it was at the resumption of hostilities. Egyptian forces are established in strength on the east bank of the Suez canal but their further advance into Sinai is hotly contested by Israeli forces.

On the Golan Heights, Israel has apparently recovered ground yielded initially to Syrian forces but has met strong resistance in its penetration of Syrian territory. What is clear is that the continuing fighting in the air and at sea, as well as on the ground, the steadily mounting casualties on both sides, the re-supply of destroyed arms, and finally the growing involvement of civilian population altogether give a distressing picture unrelieved by clear hopes of a cessation of hostilities.

At a time like this we look to the United Nations. As the Secretary General stated in his appeal last week:

"I am profoundly concerned with the role of the U.N. in such circumstances. The primary purpose of our organization is the maintenance of international peace and security. If we fail in that role, the central point of the organization's existence is jeopardized."

With the United Nations' Security Council apparently unable to agree on the terms of an appeal for a ceasefire, there is increasing concern that the conflict in the Middle East may have wider implications for the world at large and may indeed endanger the whole process of détente which eastern and western governments had laboriously been working at over the past few years and with which Canada has been very much concerned.

I do not intend to dwell on why the fighting resumed at this particular time. The facts are that the truce has been violently broken, a truce which never evolved as was intended towards a settlement in the intervening years since 1967. Immediately at the end of that conflict a long and difficult negotiation, in which Canada actively participated, took place in the Security Council of the United Nations, with the result that Resolution 242 was adopted unanimously. Every word of that resolution was negotiated and its delicate balance results from a protracted effort at setting out in the clearest possible terms, acceptable to the greatest possible number of states, the main points which have to be dealt with in order that there may be the beginning of a settlement to the Middle Eastern conflict which has been with us for 25 years.

I had thought, Mr. Speaker, that I might read into the record the terms of Resolution 242, but in order to save time I wonder whether it might be agreed that the text be included in Hansard at this point in my speech. (Text attached)

Canada has supported Resolution 242 since its adoption in 1967. Our adherence has been total but strictly limited to the terms of the resolution itself and we have always refused to add anything to it or subtract anything from it or even to interpret it or draw implications from it that were not immediately apparent from the very wording. Since it is the only text in the whole 25 years of recent Middle Eastern history that has met with wide acceptance, we still believe that it constitutes the only suitable and available framework for peace.

This peace must come from a settlement negotiated by all the parties involved in the conflict. There is no other way to devise a just and lasting settlement. One implication that can be drawn from the recent resumption of hostilities is that even the greatest powers cannot impose a settlement but, on the contrary, may be drawn into the conflict on opposing sides and thereby endanger their own attempts at opening a dialogue and developing a better climate for the peaceful resolution of other world problems.

When I say that a negotiated settlement on the basis of Resolution 242 is the only way finally to resolve the conflict, I am fully aware that since 1967 the two sides have never come together on the means of getting down to negotiations or the discussion of a settlement. While the numerous efforts of intermediaries such as Ambassador Jarring on behalf of the United Nations went on, the positions of the two sides never came quite close enough to open the avenue to negotiations and to the implementation of Resolution 242. Therefore, the ceasefire which was to open these avenues finally broke down.

A ceasefire, while undoubtedly necessary at the earliest possible moment, as I said in my statements of October 6 and October 8, will not be enough. A ceasefire should provide the opportunity for the belligerents to discuss such questions as the drawing of border lines or the resettlement of civilian populations displaced by warfare, or indeed any of the other points mentioned in the resolution. Unfortunately, the past 25 years of conflict in the Middle East prove that without the will to make peace on both sides a ceasefire is only a temporary expedient between bouts of war and a period in which the two sides re-arm and prepare for the next round of fighting.

Canadian policy, as I repeated in the House yesterday, begins from the premise that the State of Israel has a right to exist, just like any other state in the world, and the right to exist behind secure and recognized boundaries.

Some of us, Mr. Speaker, have had the privilege of visiting Israel. We had the experience of flying from south to north in a few minutes, seeing the whole of Israel spread out below us. I think we understand the concern for recognized and secure boundaries.

The first states to recognize its boundaries must be its neighbours, those states that share these boundaries with it. It follows that the frontiers of Israel must be negotiated between these neighbour states and Israel in order that they will be accepted by all.

A ceasefire which does not open the way for negotiation in that direction will not deal with the basic problems of the area. We understand the grave difficulties but we plead that a start be made on the road to a negotiated settlement.

I have noted with approval the statement of the nine member countries of the European community which says that "this ceasefire, which would make it possible to spare the peoples affected by the war further tragic ordeals, should at the same time pave the way for true negotiation in an appropriate forum, permitting a settlement of the conflict in accordance with all the provisions of Resolution 242".

As I have said on previous occasions, Canada remains prepared to play its part in a U.N. context if there is a useful role for us. We could envisage a contribution to peacekeeping if desired and required by the parties as well as the continuation of peace observation operations.

These would, of course, be under the authority of the United Nations for we consider, as I said at New York on September 25, that only under such an authority do these operations stand the best chance of success. Canada has participated in the United Nations' Truce Supervision Organization since 1954. While as a result of the current hostilities some of the UNTSO posts in the Suez Canal area have had to be evacuated, I should like to emphasize that UNTSO continues to exist even though it is unable to pursue fully at the present all of its commitments. It is important that it remain intact for future duty.

If the parties to the conflict are prepared to have a peacekeeping force constituted under the authority of the United Nations, we would be prepared to make our contribution. However, I would emphasize 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 peacekeeping. That is a lesson that our experience, particularly in Indo-China, has taught us. Unless there is basic agreement by the parties involved, the peacekeeping functions cannot be discharged satisfactorily. We must admit that it is one of the distressing aspects of the situation that parties do not appear likely to agree at this time and it is very discouraging that the Security Council has so far been unable itself to agree on a call for a ceasefire or on any other action.

While the war is going on, others have growing responsibilities and can either prolong hostilities or exert great influence in the direction of peace. The major suppliers of arms to both sides obviously can exert a moderating or stimulating influence.

The United States' Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, in his press conference on Friday, October 12, issued a call for moderation on the part of the Soviet Union, especially in the matter of supplying arms. It is unfortunate that the Soviet Union should have continued supplying arms since this appeal was made and of course we now have the situation in which the U.S. in its turn has also felt compelled to do so.

Earlier there were encouraging signs that both these powers were concerned that the conflict should not be widened or prolonged although signs now point in another direction. I hope that the great powers are still concerned to use their restraining influence to help bring about a ceasefire followed by negotiations. Otherwise one cannot envisage anything but a continuing conflict with increasing casualties on both sides, and with the supplier states finding themselves arraigned in opposite camps as in the worst days of the cold war.

It is a bleak prospect indeed that with replenished supplies at their disposal, both sides should continue the artillery duels, the tank battles, the strafing and bombing by aircraft while casualties mount among the civilian population and the theatre of war tends increasingly to engulf cities away from the main field of battle.

There can be no victory in this atmosphere but only losers on all sides. In the long term, since a just and lasting settlement is not possible without the agreement of both sides, it is obvious that the way to a settlement is not through a war of attrition which seems to be developing at this time. The longer this is allowed to continue, the more heavy will be the human losses and the material devastation. Until now, the war has been fought largely in the territories of the Suez Canal and the Golan Heights, and the fighting has not seriously affected the major population centres either in Syria, in Egypt, or in Israel. But who can foresee what a prolongation of the war will bring? Already there are reports that the bombing of military targets has brought losses to the civilian populations. It would be an even more grievous conflict if ground warfare should bring the contending forces within gunfire of the large cities, as is likely to happen unless an end is put to the fight.

At the beginning of hostilities there were relatively few Canadians in the area and I am happy to report that until now there have been no casualties among the Canadian residents or tourists present.

Canadian diplomatic missions in the war area are actively concerned about the safety of Canadian residents and visitors in their areas of responsibility. The embassies maintain records of Canadian residents and endeavour to keep track of visitors to assist in maintaining contact with them in time of trouble. Contact is normally made by telephone, though telephone facilities sometimes become overloaded.

All international airports in the area, with the exception of Damascus and Cairo, remain open for scheduled flights. As a consequence, no build-up of stranded tourists wishing to return home has developed except in Cairo where, on October 10, 1973 approximately 100 Canadian visitors were waiting for transportation from the area.

This number is gradually being reduced, as tourists, with embassy assistance, obtain bookings on ships sailing from Alexandria and on buses to Benhazi. Arrangements are now being completed to enable any Canadian tourists who remain from this number, or residents who wish to do so, to leave on a ship which the Americans have chartered.

Our embassies in Cairo and Tel Aviv have reported that they are not aware of any injuries to Canadians in their area and that all whom they have been able to contact are safe and well. All Canadians who wished to do so have already left Syria.

The present situation in the Security Council does not encourage us to envisage a Canadian initiative at the U.N. at this time. This does not mean that we remain inactive. The views of the Canadian Government about the road to peace in the Middle East as I have outlined them here and in previous statements have been conveyed to all the governments concerned.

I personally made them known to the ambassadors of Arab countries represented in Ottawa and the Ambassador of Israel, as well as the Ambassador of the Soviet Union. The Prime Minister took the opportunity to speak to Chinese leaders and urge them to use their influence for peace. Our ambassadors abroad have been very active conferring with representatives of foreign governments and special instructions have been issued to our ambassadors in the Middle East to present these views to the governments of Israel, Egypt and Syria in particular. We will continue the vigorous activity. At the same time, we are maintaining our long-standing embargo on Canadian arms to parties in the Middle East conflict.

I return to what I said at the beginning about Canadian sympathies for our fellow human beings who are caught up in this tragic situation. We want to see the citizens of Israel and of all the Arab countries live out their lives in peace and security without constant fear of another war. We want the refugees to have a settled home instead of living out their existence in frustration and plotting. We therefore urge with all the emphasis we can that there be a ceasefire as soon as possible followed by immediate steps along the path toward a settlement negotiated by the parties to the conflict which is fair and just to all concerned.



RESOLUTION 242 (1967)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 1382nd meeting,  
on 22 November 1967

The Security Council,

Expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East,  
Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security,

Emphasizing further that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter,

1. Affirms that the fulfilment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:

- (i) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
- (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;

2. Affirms further the necessity

- (a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;
- (b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;
- (c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.

-----