

Canada and the Financing of the United Nations Emergency Force, 1957-1963

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Article abstract

The current financial crisis of the United Nations is generally traced to the peacekeeping mission in the Congo and its price tag. This paper proposes that the roots of financial unrest lie rather as early as 1956, in the financing of the United Nations Emergency Force. Peacekeeping funding quickly became a litmus test of support for the United Nations - a sign of policy beyond platitudes. In Canada, the political popularity of peacekeeping required that the Diefenbaker government play an active role in trying to resolve the UN's financial predicament. However, despite the advantages that UNEF and peacekeeping brought to an unstable world, there was in fact little that Canada or the United Nations could do to force individual nations to financially support collective UN policies.

Canada and the Financing of the United Nations Emergency Force, 1957-1963

MICHAEL CARROLL

It never rains, it pours – at least that was the view from New York in early November 1956. Egypt and Hungary were under attack by no less than three of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.¹ The Soviet Union was, on the one hand, offering a rhetorical olive branch to the United States, suggesting the possibility of sending Russian troops to the Middle East as part of a bipartisan approach to ending the atrocities being committed against Egypt. At the same time, it was threatening to launch missiles against London and Paris. Delegates to the United Nations and members of the UN Secretariat worked around the clock in an attempt to garner support for resolutions amidst acrimonious debate. Night and day blurred into a juggle of time zones: Cairo, Moscow, London, Paris, and New York. Sleep deprivation was the norm and, to top it off, the effort was being orchestrated by a Secretary-General who was untested by crisis management on issues of international security. Meanwhile, relations between Canada's most valued friends and allies, Britain, the United States, and to a lesser extent France, had sunk to an all-time low against the backdrop of the American presidential election. Despite these seemingly insurmountable obstacles, the United Nations – and Canada – rose to the challenge of the Suez crisis. At the time, however, the question of financing the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) took a back seat to all of the political considerations buzzing about the UN that November.

Although member nations thought it was little more than a mild irritant during the genesis of UNEF, the issue of financing the United Nations Emergency Force not only mushroomed into a major topic of debate in diplomatic circles, but it has also become an important point of departure in understanding the policy and level of commitment that member countries had towards peacekeeping. Dollar amounts and the means of donation were key factors in the legitimisation of the UN's peace and security mandate and served

1 Of the five permanent members of the Security Council, China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States, only the US and China were not active players in the disputes in Hungary and Egypt.

to emphasise the collective nature of its organization.² However, the amount of financial support that was committed, and delivered, signified more than altruistic support for a peaceful vision. Funding became a litmus test of support for the United Nations as a whole. Member nations might express general support for the mandate, but when it came to financial contributions, the real level of commitment was tested.

For the Diefenbaker administration – as with almost all governments – financing became an issue only when it was lacking. Upon accepting stewardship in 1957 of Pearson’s peacekeeping package, the Conservative government realized that domestic political popularity demanded that peacekeeping be treated with care. Platitudes were hoisted and reassurances offered to indicate the new government’s support for the United Nations in general and UNEF in particular. Once the rhetoric died down, however, the fun(ding) began. Traditional wisdom tells us that “where your treasure is, there will be your heart.” In diplomatic terms, the Tory government discovered that where your funding is, there will be your policy.

In the autumn of 1956, less than twenty-four hours after Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester Pearson called upon the Secretary General to submit a plan “to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities,”³ Dag Hammarskjöld responded with a blueprint for the creation of the United Nations Emergency Force,⁴ which was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly on 5 November 1956.⁵ It was here that the first breach of UN protocol occurred.

2 While there is a vast literature dealing with peacekeeping in general, very little of it deals with the actual financing of operations, and the most recent accounts are almost uniformly concerned with the UN’s financial troubles in the 1990s. Susan R. Mills, “The Financing of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: The Need for a Sound Financial Basis,” *International Peace Academy Occasional Paper 3* (1989): 1-33, gives a general overview of the origins of the UN’s financial woes before moving on to more contemporary issues. Other secondary literature relevant to the origins of the UN’s financial crisis is somewhat dated, and for the most part tends to focus on issues such as ONUC and Article 19 which brought the UN’s financial crisis to a head in the immediate post-Diefenbaker era. For example see, John Stoessinger, *Financing the United Nations System* (Washington, D.C., 1964), John Stoessinger, “Financing the United Nations,” *International Conciliation* 535 (November 1961): 3-72; Terence Higgins, “The Politics of United Nations Finance,” *The World Today* 19/9 (September 1963): 380-389; Rosalyn Higgins, “United Nations peacekeeping – political and financial problems,” *The World Today* 21/8 (August 1965): 324-337; Richard Szawłowski, “Recent Financial Problems of the United Nations,” *Public Finance* 18/2 (1963): 148-183; Richard Szawłowski, “Recent Financial Problems of the United Nations, Part II,” *Public Finance* 20/3 (1965): 423-455. The main articles dealing with Canada’s contributions to the financial debate at the UN during this time are, Peter Bishop, “Canada’s Policy on the Financing of UN Peacekeeping Operations,” *International Journal* 20/4 (Autumn 1965): 463-83; and William H. Barton, “Who Will Pay for Peace? The UN Crisis,” *Behind the Headlines* 24/5 (August 1965): 1-16.

3 General Assembly Resolution (GA Res.) 998 (ES-I), 4 November 1956.

4 United Nations document A/3289, 4 November 1956.

5 GA Res. 1000 (ES-I), 5 November 1956.

In his report, the Secretary General should have addressed the financial implications associated with the creation of a large-scale peacekeeping operation.⁶ It was not until two days later, however, in his "2nd and final Report of the Secretary-General on the plan for an emergency international UN Force," that Hammarskjöld proposed contributing nations should be responsible for their individual troops' equipment and salaries, while all other costs associated with the force would be covered by the UN.⁷ Though this report was accepted only conditionally by the General Assembly with the passage of General Assembly Resolution 1001 (ES-I) on 7 November 1956, Hammarskjöld's funding suggestion was to become the accepted norm.

It was originally estimated that UNEF would cost somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$25 million dollars for its first year,⁸ almost half of the regular United Nations budget for 1956. For this reason it was deemed necessary by some to fund UNEF outside of the UN's regular budget from a special account under the direction of the Secretary General. For Dag Hammarskjöld, the special fund was a matter of expediency.⁹ Were finances to be apportioned from the regular budget, it would take an inordinate amount of time to get the funds approved and disbursed, and in November 1956, time was of the essence. If UNEF was not included in the regular budget, however, it would appear that the force's costs were extraordinary, and create ambiguity as to whether the expenses were to be borne by the entire UN membership. Nonetheless, the Special Account for UNEF was opened with a \$10 million loan from the Working Capital Fund, to be paid back when the account became sustained by member states' assessments and volunteer contributions for UNEF. Collecting the assessments, however, was easier said than done.

On 21 December 1956, UNGA Resolution 1089 (XI) was passed, in which it was stated that UNEF expenses "shall be borne by the United Nations and shall be apportioned among the Member States, to the extent of \$10 million, in accordance with the scale of assessments adopted by the General Assembly for contributions to the annual budget of the Organization for the financial year 1957."¹⁰ Firmly entrenching the theory of collective financial responsibility, this resolution was passed by a vote of sixty-two in favour, eight against, and

6 In examining Canada's policy on peacekeeping financing, Peter Bishop notes with some surprise that, "it is remarkable that no Canadian delegate objected when UNEF was established in a way that completely by-passed proper financial procedure." See Peter Bishop, "Canada's Policy on the Financing of U.N. Peace-keeping Operations," 470.

7 UN doc. A/3302, 6 November 1956.

8 The Secretary General estimated in July 1957 that the total cost for November 1956 to December 1957 would be approximately \$23.7 million. See UN doc. A/CN.1/R.308, 17 July 1957.

9 For a full explanation of Hammarskjöld's rationale regarding the creation of a special UNEF account, see UN doc. A/3943, 9 October 1958.

10 GA Res. 1089 (XI), 21 December 1956.

seven abstentions. It was not entirely unreasonable for Hammarskjöld to assume that since members of the General Assembly had passed the financial resolutions and approved the creation of UNEF, they would also assume responsibility for its financing. Few, however, were truly willing to follow through financially in support of such expensive collective policy.

That the United Nations would pay for UNEF was not so much the root of the problem as was the question of how costs would be divided among its membership. Canada believed early on that the financing for UNEF should be undertaken in a collective manner, according to the established UN financial assessments. In part, the Canadians hoped that interested parties (like Canada) would not be saddled with the majority of the costs, but more importantly, the Canadian delegation perceived that “a bad precedent would be set if Members, having approved the resolution [GA Res. 1000 (ES-I)] by an almost unanimous decision, were to decide that their government should not provide adequate resources to carry out these responsibilities.”¹¹ For Canada, the United States, the UK, and their Western allies,¹² it was just a matter of course that all nations should support the UN in its mandate to uphold international peace and security, as outlined in Article 1 of the UN Charter. While this may have been, from time to time, the majority opinion, it was by no means the only view on UNEF financing.

The USSR and members of the communist bloc opposed UNEF as a matter of principle. Relying on the supremacy of the Security Council in matters of security, the Soviets claimed that UNEF was illegal because it had been created under the auspices of the General Assembly. The Soviets also argued that since UNEF was not part of the regular UN budget, there was no responsibility on the part of member states to foot the bill. To buttress their argument, they stated that the aggressors – in their view Britain, France, and Israel – should assume complete responsibility for the costs of the force. A different argument came from some middling powers such as Spain, for the most part willing to accept a minor responsibility for the costs, but who argued that the permanent members should shoulder the greatest burden as they were primarily charged with dealing with issues of peace and security. In addition, the Latin American countries suggested that voluntary contributions should be sought as a means

11 National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG 25, Vol. 177, file 12479-B-40 [pt. 77]. CANDELNY to Department of External Affairs (DEA), 25 November 1956, GA Res. 1000 (ES-I) was adopted with a vote of 57:0:19.

12 France stands out as a sometime exception here. Though not a delinquent on UNEF payments, France chose not to pay any assessments for the United Nations mission in the Congo. Despite having signed the UN Charter, thus accepting the budgetary responsibilities that came with it, France nonetheless argued, according to Dr. Rosalyn Higgins, that, “members of the United Nations can be bound only by decisions of the Security Council under Chapter VII and that recommendations, by either the Security Council or the General Assembly, cannot give rise to binding financial obligations.” See Higgins, “United Nations Peacekeeping,” 327.

of paying for UNEF. Finally, there were those less-developed nations that either feigned indifference to matters not directly relevant to them, or pleaded an economic inability to pay for the costs associated with peacekeeping.¹³ Thus when John Diefenbaker and the Conservative Party came to power in Canada in June 1957, UNEF's finances were already on a very slippery footing.

Given the varying viewpoints in early 1957 on UNEF's legality and how its costs would be apportioned, the Secretary General appealed to Member States for voluntary contributions to carry UNEF above and beyond the initial \$10 million. Despite Canada's drive for the creation of UNEF, and the pride the government and the nation were starting to derive from UNEF's apparent success, the Liberals had not contemplated any additional donations in June 1957. Having already absorbed the costs of transporting troops and equipment to the Middle East,¹⁴ neither the Department of External Affairs nor the Department of Finance had felt any compulsion to contribute further, though donations at a later date were not ruled out.¹⁵

As a result of this Liberal policy, the Diefenbaker government was not initially besieged by the UN with urgent requests for financial assistance, nor was it subject to internal departmental pressures. The new secretaries of state for External Affairs, first John Diefenbaker and later Sidney Smith, were able to settle into their jobs without major crises immediately arising on the UN front. Despite their disavowal of Canadian policy during the Suez crisis, the Conservatives now quickly threw their full support behind the UN and its politically popular peacekeeping initiatives.¹⁶ The Prime Minister, in his first speech

13 See the proceedings of the Fifth Committee, especially November/December 1956.

14 The HMCS *Magnificent* was sent to Egypt at a cost of \$333,312 while air transport cost an additional \$438,819. After the election of the Conservatives, the Permanent Mission to the UN brought the idea of compensation for UNEF's initial transportation costs to the attention of the UN Controller in July 1957 – after being met with some surprise by UN officials, the idea, it seems, was quietly dropped by the Department of External Affairs in light of statements made by the Canadian representative to the Fifth Committee in December 1956 and considerations of the political ramifications of bringing the issue up for scrutiny by both the Fifth Committee and UN General Assembly. Representatives from the departments of Finance and National Defence were less willing to write off these costs. See UNEF file, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), PERMISNY to USSEA, 31 July 1957; USSEA to PERMISNY, 19 August 1957; and "Minutes of Interdepartmental Meeting on Financing of UNEF Held in Room 276 in the East Block on August 14, 1957, at 1600 hours."

15 NAC, RG 19, Vol. 4496, Series F2, file 82-05-3-2 (1). Note for File by S. Pollock, Department of Finance, 31 May 1957 and 5 June 1957.

16 At his introductory press conference, Sidney Smith was a little too supportive of Lester Pearson's policies for Diefenbaker's liking. When asked his opinion of the Liberal government's policy during the Suez Crisis, Smith replied, "In the main, I agreed." After struggling to qualify his statement, reporters tried to pin the new SSEA down on his opinion, at which point Diefenbaker interrupted and instructed Smith: "Your policy in that regard, is the policy we advanced at the time in the House of Commons." See Arthur Blakely, "Ottawa Day by Day," *Montreal Gazette*, 17 September 1957.

before the UN, reassured delegates that the change of government in Ottawa did not signify “any change whatsoever in fundamental international principles or attitudes...Canada will continue to be a strong supporter of the continuance of United Nations Emergency Force until its work is done.”¹⁷ Perhaps this speech played well for the domestic audience who continued to be enraptured by Canada’s “new role” on the world stage. International opinion, however, varied. According to the British delegation, Diefenbaker’s speech was presented “with no very great distinction,” and while Sidney Smith made a favourable first impression in 1958, “on the Middle East he was completely out of his depth, and was altogether bamboozled.”¹⁸ In the shadow of Pearson’s Nobel Prize, the Conservative government struggled to find its foreign policy footing. Faced with competing interests among various allies, it appeared to some that Diefenbaker and his colleagues were “reluctant to take the positive line for which Canada’s membership of NATO and essentially Western alignment seemed to call.”¹⁹ To others, the fault was not in the policy message itself but in the presentation by its messenger. In the diplomatic world of the 1950s, diplomacy and eloquence were still important enough to overshadow content.²⁰ For the most part, the debate over UNEF had quieted down by the fall of 1957 and was for all intents and purposes left to languish in the Egyptian desert.²¹

UNEF’s budget was approved at \$20 million in 1958, its second year,²² and while the refusal of some members to pay their assessments was an annoyance,

17 Also quoted in “Canadian Position on UNEF,” 15 November 1957, NAC, RG 25, Vol. 6104, file 50366-40 [pt FP1]. John Diefenbaker, statement before the UN General Assembly, 23 September 1957, *Statements and Speeches*, 57/33.

18 See Public Record Office (PRO), DO 35/10705, “Notes on Commonwealth Delegations at the Twelfth Session of the General Assembly” and “The Commonwealth and the Irish Republic at the Thirteenth Session of the General Assembly.”

19 *Ibid.*

20 For example, the British judged Diefenbaker and Sid Smith on this basis, and considered the Canadian Ambassador to the UN, Charles Ritchie, to be “something of a light-weight,” while another Canadian delegate, though deemed intelligent, was criticised for having “the Canadian virus of compromise in a very concentrated form.” The British viewed Canada’s policy of mediation in the Fifth Committee as a course of action that has “not always been as entirely helpful to our cause as might have been wished,” and representation by the Canadians was less than stellar, as evidenced by one Member of Parliament was “not in any way to be classed as personally knowledgeable in the matters under discussion.” See “Notes on Commonwealth Delegations at the Twelfth Session of the General Assembly,” “The Commonwealth and the Irish Republic at the Thirteenth Session of the General Assembly,” “The Commonwealth and the Irish Republic at the Fourteenth Session of the General Assembly,” PRO, DO 35/10705.

21 The DEA did continue to think about possible ways of expanding UNEF to deal with problems throughout the Middle East, though it was eventually dropped for fear of “provoking the withdrawal of some of the less enthusiastic members of UNEF.” See R.M. Tesh, Memo, “Extension of the functions of UNEF,” 17 February 1958, PRO, VR1082/1, FO 371/134302.

22 UN doc. A/3823. This was later raised to \$25 million by GA Res. 1337 (XIII), 13 December 1958.

it was not critical to the financial well-being of the UN as a whole. At a meeting between representatives from the Canadian departments of External Affairs, Finance, and National Defence, it was pointed out that "since Canada had great stakes in UNEF through its contingent and the equipment it had furnished it should take the lead in the General Assembly debate on the UNEF budget and in the Fifth Committee."²³ Perhaps more important though was what was left unsaid – Canada was the senior member of the Western alliance represented on all of the financial and advisory committees related to UNEF. Where it would have been impolitic for the United States or United Kingdom to bring forward peacekeeping proposals, Canada was viewed by many UN delegates as the acceptable face of the West, allowing Canadian delegates to test the waters for the Western alliance.

While the Western countries were clearly wedded to the rhetoric of collective responsibility, the shortcomings of reality were apparent early on. By the end of 1957, UNEF was already \$3.5 million in debt and there was an additional shortfall of \$7 million for 1958. Nonetheless, the absence of war in the Middle East was greatly appreciated by the Eisenhower administration and thus the United States was quite willing to top up UNEF's coffers, paying some \$12 million in 1957.²⁴ While the American generosity greatly aided the Secretary General in keeping the UN afloat, it also reinforced the belief of some members that the US would just pick up the tab – no matter how large – and those members were therefore unconcerned about their collective responsibility for financing peacekeeping operations. For its part, Canada was publicly appreciative, but on other levels resented the American aid, realizing that it worked at cross purposes with Canadian initiatives to encourage the collective financing of the United Nations.²⁵

In 1959, the collective financing of UNEF, or lack thereof, became a major issue for Canada and the United Nations. The Department of External Affairs (DEA), in conversation with its overseas representatives – especially those in Latin and South America – became aware of a growing uneasiness with the financing mechanism for UNEF. The DEA's exasperation was apparent in its

23 UNEF file, DFAIT. "Minutes of Interdepartmental Meeting on Financing of UNEF Held in Room 276 in the East Block on August 14, 1957, at 1600 hours." The Fifth Committee was technically called the General Assembly's Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

24 PRO, UN 1117/87, FO 371/129792. C.D. Wiggins, British Embassy, Washington, to R.S. Scrivener, UN Dept, Foreign Office, 24 October 1957. The American financial support was given despite Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's recognition that "it might be politically unwise for the United States to pay too heavy a share of the expenses." See "Memorandum for the Prime Minister," 21 September 1957, UNEF file, DFAIT.

25 NAC, RG 25, Vol. 147, file 6386-C-40. CANDELNY to External, 1 December 1960. The American aid policy became even more prominent with the Cold War ramifications of the costly operation in the Congo.

instructions to its delegation at the UN. It wrote: "For El Salvador, whose 1959 assessment for the UNEF special account is \$7,571.00, to lead a campaign against collective financing of UNEF, and for other Latin American Nations to readily fall in with this lead, is in our opinion at best irresponsible conduct."²⁶ For some nations, the amounts involved were trivial: equivalent, as one observer remarked, to the cost of a few large diplomatic receptions or a couple of limousines.²⁷ Charles Ritchie, the Canadian ambassador to the UN, was instructed to do his best to remind these nations that the majority of peacekeeping costs were being absorbed by a limited number of countries and that "special consideration was given to members with low per capita incomes." More importantly, perhaps, the Canadian delegation hoped to reinforce the idea of the benefits of collective financing, not just for peacekeeping, but for the United Nations as a whole.²⁸ This was a common theme heard from the Canadian delegation in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

In November 1959, Canada's delegate to the Fifth Committee, Arthur Irwin, reiterated the Canadian stance, stating unequivocally that:

Those who seek to apply a separate scale of assessment based on the benefit principle in the field of peace and security should give serious thought to its relevance to other United Nations activities. Establishment of separate scales of assessment for various activities unquestionably would jeopardize the Organization as it is at present constituted.²⁹

Irwin, in his speech, addressed all of the competing interpretations opposed to collective responsibility and argued that they undermined the UN Charter, both in letter and spirit. "If we believe in UNEF," Irwin continued, "then it follows we must make adequate financial provision for it. If we are not prepared to do this, then we shall be brought face to face with the serious consequences which would flow from its termination."³⁰

As of 31 October 1959, fifty countries were delinquent on their UNEF accounts for 1959, thirty-nine countries had contributed nothing towards 1958's

26 NAC, RG 19, Vol. 4286, file 8204-11-2 (2). External to PERMISNY, 6 October 1959.

27 Department of State Circular 1526, For Ambassador from Secretary of State, 7 March 1963, Vol. II. Cables, UN, Box 312, Subjects, National Security File (NSF), John F. Kennedy Library (JFK).

28 The Canadian delegation also suggested to some representatives that "if Members could ignore their financial responsibilities under this resolution, the same could happen in connection with a resolution of some other Committee, for example the Economic Committee in which the under developed countries might have a strong interest." See NAC, RG 25, Vol. 177, file 12479-B-40 [pt. 77], CANDELNY to DEA, 25 November 1956.

29 NAC, RG 19, Vol. 4286, file 8204-11-2 (2). Arthur Irwin to the Fifth Committee, 25 November 1959, Canadian Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly (Fourteenth Session), Press Release No. 22. Also quoted in *External Affairs* 12/1 (January 1960): 472-3.

30 *Ibid.*

assessments, and twenty-six nations had made no payment for 1957, for a total owing of \$55.2 million.³¹ The Western nations were clearly unwilling to allow the financial collapse of UNEF; Canada, as a proxy of the Western alliance, spearheaded an effort to bring about a compromise to provide for a more universally acceptable means of funding the peacekeeping efforts in Egypt.³² The result was General Assembly Resolution 1441 (XIV), adopted on 5 December 1959. The “Canadian formula,”³³ as it was commonly referred to in British and American diplomatic correspondence, provided for voluntary contributions to be used against regular UNEF assessments. This allowed for a rebate of fifty percent for those members wishing to avail themselves of the reprieve.³⁴ As the US and UK provided the majority of the voluntary contributions, and as there was no desire to aid the Soviet Union in shirking its financial responsibilities, permanent members of the Security Council were exempt from the offer. Likewise, those nations with the capacity to meet their financial obligations were encouraged to forego the credit.

As the rebate was not applicable to any of the permanent members of the Security Council, Canada – as an important middle power – was to some extent thrust into a position of leadership. The Scandinavian countries immediately assumed that Canada would forego the rebate, despite the fact that Irwin had stated before the Fifth Committee that: “My Government’s ultimate decision on this point will be determined in the light of the debate and the voting on the draft resolution and of the subsequent performance of other governments in discharging their financial obligations.”³⁵ Even Norway, immediately announcing that it would decline the financial rebate, was shocked to learn that it was acting alone, as Canada had made no firm decision regarding the assessed peacekeeping costs. Pressure on the Canadian delegation at the UN was intense, leading Charles Ritchie to conclude:

There is no doubt that a decision by Canada to take advantage of the rebate would have serious consequences here in its effect on attitudes of other governments. Canada is known as the proposer of the Force and a strong and constant advocate of full collective responsibility on the basis of the regular scale of assessments. Any decision to depart from this position would not, I believe,

31 Ibid.

32 Canada co-sponsored the resolution along with Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Yugoslavia.

33 It is somewhat ironic that the “Canadian formula” was, for all intents and purposes, an American proposal put forward by Canada. See USSEA to Deputy Minister, Department of Finance, 6 November 1959, NAC, RG 19, Vol. 4286, file 8204-11-2 (2).

34 In the case of Canada, it amounted to \$307,182.

35 NAC, RG 19, Vol. 4286, file 8204-11-2 (2). Arthur Irwin to the Fifth Committee, 25 November 1959, Canadian Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly (Fourteenth Session), Press Release No. 22. Also quoted in *External Affairs* 12/1 (January 1960): 474.

be viewed here as a decision taken purely on financial grounds, but one which might involve wider implications concerning Canada's attitude to collective undertakings by the UN.³⁶

Ritchie's concerns were shared by his colleagues in External Affairs, though the same can not be said of the Department of Finance.³⁷ It was only once the crisis in the Congo erupted in July 1960 and the Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC) was established, that the ramifications associated with the financing of peacekeeping operations took on grander importance. As Canadian DEA officials pointed out in a brief on 5 September 1960, acceptance of the rebates "would tend to preclude Canada from taking a strong position in the General Assembly on the financing of the United Nations operations in the Congo, in regard to which we presume we should press vigorously...[i]n which the stakes are very much higher."³⁸ With the definite support of a number of Canada's allies, the issue was brought before Cabinet and the rebate was declined on 1 October 1960.³⁹

In the early 1960s, UNEF's budget hovered around \$19 million,⁴⁰ though due to peacekeeping arrears, the UN comptroller suggested the fiscal situation "would be critical" as early as February 1960.⁴¹ By 31 May 1960, UNEF's unpaid dues totalled in excess of \$24 million.⁴² Though the Secretary General was able to juggle cash accounts and delay payment on certain bills, the situation was compounded with ONUC's monthly costs of \$10 million. The UN faced a rapidly mounting financial crisis. One suggestion put forward in private by the American delegation was that UNEF be reduced or withdrawn in order

36 NAC, RG 25, Vol. 7779, file 12479-J-40 pt.1.2. PERMISNY to External, 22 April 1960.

37 Donald Fleming, in correspondence with Howard Green, questioned whether acceptance of the rebate by Canada would have the detrimental effects outlined by the Secretary of State for External Affairs. See Howard Green to Donald Fleming, 14 June 1960, and Donald Fleming to Howard Green, 24 June 1960, NAC, RG 25, Vol. 7779, file 12479-3-40 [pt. 1.2].

38 NAC, RG 25, Vol. 7779, file 12479-J-40 [pt. 1.2]. United Nations Division to D.L. (1) Division, 5 September 1960. See also "Memorandum for the Minister," 7 July 1960, NAC, RG 25, Vol. 7779, file 12479-J-40 [pt. 1.3].

39 By October 1960, the rebate had already been declined by Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Australia, and the Netherlands. Belgium had also decided to accept only half of the rebate, and it was hoped that other countries would follow in Canada's footsteps and decline further reductions in their peacekeeping assessments.

40 The Secretary General estimated that the cost of UNEF for 1960 would be \$18.9 million, but was authorised to spend up to \$20 million in 1960 and \$19 million in 1961. The estimate for 1961 was \$19.4 million, but in an effort to keep costs down the Fifth Committee recommended that the Secretary General stay under \$19 million. See UN doc. A/4160, 23 July 1959; GA Res. 1441 (XVI), 5 December 1959; GA Res. 1575 (XV), 20 December 1960; and UN doc. A/4409, 21 July 1960.

41 NAC, RG 19, Vol. 4286, file 8204-11-2 (2). PERMISNY to External, 3 June 1959.

42 UN doc. A/4674, 19 December 1960.

to facilitate the financing of ONUC, and to assuage the fears of less developed nations that peacekeeping operations were to become “permanent institutions.” The Canadian delegation, working behind closed doors, “vigorously opposed” the American idea of favouring ONUC over UNEF, not only because of the ramifications it held for the Middle East, but also because “the United Nations would be admitting that it could carry out only one peace-keeping operation at a time – an admission which would seriously undermine the organization’s future peace-keeping ability.”⁴³ Canada, while not abandoning the ideal of collective responsibility, preferred to sway cost-conscious nations with rebates along the lines of the resolutions adopted in 1959, as opposed to shutting down operations altogether. Faced with Canadian and Scandinavian opposition, the United States reconsidered its position and abandoned its efforts towards UNEF’s withdrawal.

With discussions surrounding the costs of ONUC, Canadians acknowledged early on the weakness of UNEF’s financing mechanism. As the Canadian representative to the Fifth Committee warned:

...the mistakes made in financing UNEF must be avoided at all costs. Many States had not contributed to the UNEF special account because, rightly or wrongly, they did not feel themselves obliged to contribute to it in the same way as to other expenses of the Organization. If a similar financial system was adopted for the Congo, it would clearly be courting similar failure.⁴⁴

Despite the magnitude of the problem, sustained efforts at solving it were not sought by the UN Secretariat. Hammarskjöld was an idealist and visionary who preferred to look at larger issues, leaving the concrete hows and whys – including financing – to be sorted out after the fact. While drawing attention to the deteriorating financial plight of the UN in a press conference, Hammarskjöld tempered his concern, stating, “to my mind it is absolutely excluded that members would, for what really is a small amount of money, consider wrecking a most important political operation. That is why I am in no way worried.”⁴⁵ Unfortunately for the United Nations, the idealism that Dag Hammarskjöld displayed died with him on 17 September 1961.

U Thant was appointed by the General Assembly as interim Secretary General on 3 November 1961, and in many ways he was the antithesis of Dag Hammarskjöld. A simple man of few words, U Thant was inclined to eschew

43 NAC, RG 25, Vol. 5102, file 5004-AT-40 [pt. 1]. Final Report of the Fifth Committee, Item No. 27(a): United Nations Emergency Force – Summary.

44 General E.L.M. Burns to the Fifth Committee, 5 December 1960, quoted in Peter Bishop, “Canada and the Controversy Over the Financing of U.N. Peace-keeping Operations,” (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1968): 322.

45 NAC, RG 19, Vol. 4286, file 8204-11-2 (2). PERMISNY to External, 14 August 1959.

grand designs and deal instead in a very practical manner with the problems facing the UN. Stabilizing the finances of the organization became a top priority.

At the conclusion of the 16th General Assembly in 1961, several resolutions were passed in an attempt to ease the mounting financial troubles of the UN. Resolution 1733 (XVI) relieved the initial pressure, as it allowed for the continued financing of UNEF and ONUC until 30 June 1962. The main relief, however, was contained in Resolution 1739 (XVI), which authorized the Secretary General to issue \$200 million in bonds to be repaid from the UN's regular budget over twenty-five years at two percent interest. Recognizing the bonds as only a short-term palliative patch and not a long-term solution,⁴⁶ the General Assembly also called upon the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to render an advisory opinion as to whether peacekeeping costs constituted "expenses of the Organization" under the Charter of the United Nations.⁴⁷

Speaking before the 16th General Assembly, U Thant, after describing the grim financial prospects of the UN, stated:

In view of the present situation and the prospects for the immediate future, I consider it imperative that the General Assembly take appropriate action during the present session to re-establish the financial solvency of the Organization and to provide it with the financial resources necessary to carry out its continuing responsibilities.⁴⁸

Though the bond issue was primarily needed to cover growing peacekeeping costs, it was promoted as an attempt to deal with the financial situation of the UN as a whole and avoided specific mention of UNEF or ONUC. This approach was intended to make the bonds more attractive to those nations opposed in principle to the idea of collective responsibility for peacekeeping, but which may have been willing to purchase bonds in order to improve the general plight of the United Nations. The financing of UN peacekeeping missions until July also conveniently coincided with the start of the fiscal year in Washington. Because the bond issue was an American idea,⁴⁹ it was only natural that the United States announced its support for the initiative and requested Congress to approve \$100 million for the purchase of bonds. After

46 See letter to the President from Ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson, Department of State to White House, 23 December 1961, NSF, JFK, Vol. I, Cables, UN, Box 312, Subjects.

47 GA Res. 1731 (XVI), 20 December 1961.

48 Quoted in "United Nations Financing," memo by Geoff Murray, 8 March 1962, NAC, RG 25, Vol. 5102, file 5004-AT-40 pt. 1. Former American Representative to the UN, Henry Cabot Lodge, also stated that "inadequate funds is the greatest single danger to its [the United Nations'] continued existence at this time." Henry Cabot Lodge to John Sparkman, 26 February 1962, NSF, JFK, 7/62-8/62, General, UN, Box 311, Subjects.

49 Cabinet Paper, 19 January 1962, United Nations Bond Issue, PRO, 2-F.D. 40/95/02, T317/54; United Nations – Bond Issue, Box 109, Subjects, President's Office Files (POF), JFK.

heated debate in the Senate and the House of Representatives, an intense lobbying effort of senior officials, and intervention by the President, a bill was passed approving a "loan" for the bond purchase, though only \$25 million was allowable up front, the rest to be provided on a matching basis with purchases by other countries, up to a maximum of \$100 million.⁵⁰ As President Kennedy stated in his 1962 State of the Union Address in support of the initiative, "It will not only keep the U.N. solvent, but require all voting members to pay their fair share of its activities."⁵¹ This shift towards a stronger advocacy for collective responsibility was a policy direction with which Canada was in complete agreement.

However, full support for the bond issue itself was given by the Diefenbaker government only after it was pointed out that the bonds were the sole chance Canada had of being reimbursed for any ongoing contributions to UNEF and ONUC.⁵² The government believed in the idea of collective responsibility that underlay the bond issue, though was reticent about co-sponsoring the resolution for fear of being asked to give substance to their rhetoric with contributions above and beyond Canada's regular assessment. However, falling back on their regular position as a strong supporter of the UN and a good North American ally of the US, Canada announced its co-sponsorship of the resolution on 18 December 1961.⁵³ When brought before the Fifth Committee for debate, the resolution was, not surprisingly, vociferously derided by the Soviet delegate. Ultimately, though, the resolution passed the General Assembly by a vote of fifty-eight in favour, thirteen against, and twenty-four abstentions.

Canada was one of the first nations to announce its support of the bond issue, purchasing \$6.24 million in United Nations bonds, an amount equivalent to Canada's regular UN budget assessment of 3.12 percent. It was suggested on more than one occasion by the Americans that Canada should purchase additional bonds from the Secretary General, to a total of \$10 to \$12.5 million, as it was perceived that support from the United States' closest allies would help facilitate the Kennedy administration's negotiations with Congress. Solace was

50 For an interesting overview of the US debate see British Embassy, Washington, to the Right Honourable The Earl of Home, Foreign Office, 25 September 1962, PRO, T 317/55. Public opinion also had an important role in the debate; see Congressional Polls on U.S. Purchases of UN Bonds, 29 March 1962, Public Gives UN Big Vote of Confidence in Time of Crisis 2/8/62, Box 24, 1960-63, Public Opinion on Functions and Organization of United Nations, 1943-1965, Office of Public Opinion, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), RG 59.

51 Quoted in Department of State Background Papers, The United Nations Bond Issue, 1/62-2/62. General, UN, Box 311, Subjects, NSF, JFK.

52 NAC, RG 25, Vol. 99, file 5475-AY-40 [pt. 21]. Geoff Murray to John Diefenbaker, 15 December 1961.

53 The initial draft resolution had been put forward on 16 December 1961 by Denmark, Ethiopia, Malaya, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia.

taken in the fact that similar efforts with the British to cajole further bond purchases were equally unsuccessful.⁵⁴ However, as smaller countries pledged amounts in excess of their regular allotments, tensions rose in the Canadian bureaucracy with External Affairs in favour of contributing more to secure Canada's place in the world and Finance maintaining a tight rein on the government's purse-strings.⁵⁵

Originally intended to last until December 1963, the bond drive was extended into 1964, and eventually raised almost \$170 million dollars from sixty nations, of which \$19.2 million was used to finance UNEF.⁵⁶ The financial crisis, while eased for the moment, was not resolved. In many ways the bond issue exacerbated the problem as those nations opposed to the collective financing of peacekeeping started to withhold the equivalent of the bond servicing from their regular budget assessments. Clearly, real solutions were still needed.

In an attempt to reconcile the divergent opinions surrounding the UN Charter and the requirement to finance peacekeeping operations collectively, Canada and seven other nations co-sponsored a resolution presented at the end of the 16th General Assembly to refer the matter to the International Court of Justice.⁵⁷ It had been suggested as early as 1956 that the allocation of UNEF's costs should be determined by the ICJ, though at that time, UN finances were in good working order and the drastic ramifications of *ad hoc* financing could not have been foreseen. However, in light of the grave financial predicament in which the UN found itself in 1961, a majority of member states now wished to seek the opinion of the international court. The need for an opinion was further highlighted by the fact that some states ran the risk of losing their votes in the General Assembly with a showdown over Article 19 of the UN Charter

54 Memorandum for the President, 18 January 1962, United Nations – Bond Issue, Box 311, Subjects, POF, JFK; also found in 1/62-3/62, General, UN, Box 311, Subjects, NSF, JFK; PERMISNY to External, 23 January 1962, NAC, RG 19, Vol. 3855, file 8203-01 (1); Cabinet Paper, 19 January 1962, PRO, 2-F.D. 40/95/02, T317/54. The Americans felt that the British should buy \$20 to \$25 million in bonds, as opposed to the \$12 million pledged. According to one State Department official, it appeared that the UK was “‘dragging its feet’ in a manner to discourage other countries from making large purchases.” Apparently the British were overly optimistic about the success of the bond drive and worried that the UN would be so infused with cash so as to “finance irresponsible actions in Africa.” See New York to Secretary of State, 16 February 1962, NSF, JFK, Vol. I, Cables, UN, Box 312, Subjects.

55 Contributions in excess of their regular assessments were pledged not only by the US, but also by Australia, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Liberia, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Sweden, and Tunisia. See UN doc. A/C.5/974, Annex VI, 13 May 1963.

56 The total bonds purchased amounted to \$169,910,923, of which \$76,263,276 was contributed by the United States.

57 Canada co-sponsored the resolution along with Denmark, Japan, Liberia, Pakistan, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

looming on the horizon.⁵⁸ While the Soviets saw the issue as a political, rather than a legal, problem, according to one DEA official, "It has not been considered practicable to invoke Article 19...in the absence of an authoritative opinion on the legal obligation and in view of the actual response of members to the financial assessments levied for UNEF and ONUC."⁵⁹ Thus, Canada hoped the anticipated response by the Court in favour of collective financing would remove much of the speculation surrounding the UN Charter.

With a vote of fifty-two to eleven (with thirty-two abstentions) on 20 December 1961, the General Assembly called on the ICJ to return an advisory opinion as to whether peacekeeping expenses were to be regarded as an "expense of the Organization," as Canada and the United States believed, or as an extraordinary expense. The latter view, held by among others the Soviets and the French, meant that peacekeeping would not be covered as an enforceable cost by the financing provisions in Article 17 of the Charter.⁶⁰ The Soviets argued that since the General Assembly could not enforce, but only recommend, peace and security operations, it could not impose compulsory assessments. To bolster their arguments, the Soviets contended that peace and security operations could be financed only through special agreements under Article 43 of the Charter.⁶¹

58 Article 19 states: "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member."

59 NAC, RG 25, Vol. 5102, file 5004-AT-40 [pt. 1]. "United Nations Financing," memo by Geoff Murray, 8 March 1962.

60 Article 17 states: "1) The General Assembly shall consider and approve the budget of the Organization. 2) The expenses of the Organization shall be borne by the Members as apportioned by the General Assembly. 3) The General Assembly shall consider and approve any financial and budgetary arrangements with specialized agencies referred to in Article 57 and shall examine the administrative budgets of such specialized agencies with a view to making recommendations to the agencies concerned."

61 Article 43 of the UN Charter states: "1) All Members of the United Nations, in order to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, undertake to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including rights of passage, necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security. 2) Such agreement or agreements shall govern the numbers and types of forces, their degree of readiness and general location, and the nature of the facilities and assistance to be provided. 3) The agreement or agreements shall be negotiated as soon as possible on the initiative of the Security Council. They shall be concluded between the Security Council and Members or between the Security Council and groups of Members and shall be subject to ratification by the signatory states in accordance with their respective constitutional processes."

Twenty-three states submitted written arguments to be considered by the ICJ, while eight countries, including Canada, also chose to make an oral statement before the court.⁶² Speaking first, Marcel Cadieux, Legal Adviser to the Department of External Affairs, set out the Western alliance's case for the collective responsibility of all UN members to absorb peacekeeping costs. Cadieux's elocution was persuasive enough to be "singled out for particular attention" by the Soviets. In contrast, it was generally perceived that the Soviet delegate "failed to make any serious dent in the Western position and that by and large his statement was a weak one."⁶³ Despite subtle variations in the Canadian and American approaches, the Soviets failed to exploit these differences. Such differences nonetheless "demonstrated the difficulty the court would have in delivering a judgment."⁶⁴

The court handed down its ruling on 20 July 1962, rejecting the Soviet and French claims by a margin of nine to five, thereby affirming the costs of UNEF and ONUC as regular "expenses of the Organization."⁶⁵ Considering that only fifty-two members voted to refer the financial interpretation of the Charter to the ICJ, the 17th General Assembly accepted the Court's opinion by a somewhat surprising margin of seventy-six to seventeen, with eight abstentions.⁶⁶ This was in part because a concurrent resolution, co-sponsored by Canada, called upon a Working Group of 21 to consider the financing of peacekeeping operations, with the tacit understanding that the final result would include a formula to reduce the assessments of the poorer nations. Despite this apparent victory for Canada and other like-minded states, international lawyer and academic Dr. Rosalyn Higgins interjected a dose of healthy realism when she stated that, "it must be acknowledged that it is exceedingly difficult to require powerful sovereign States to give financial support for action which they do not regard as being in their interests."⁶⁷ Any hopes pinned on the Working Group of 21 to quickly resolve the financial troubles of the UN evaporated in early 1963.

Despite the theory of equality built into the General Assembly – one nation, one vote – the preponderance of American capital that kept the UN

62 In addition to Canada, the Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom, Norway, Australia, Ireland, the Soviet Union, and the United States all made oral presentations. For a copy of Canada's written submission and oral statement see NAC, RG 25, Vol. 5102, file 5004-AT-40 [pt. 2 FP]

63 EMBHAGUE to EXTOTT, 23 May 1962, in *ibid.*

64 *Ibid.*

65 According to Francis Plimpton, former Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations, the decision was "almost 300 pages of different opinions that contain some of the most turgid and inept prose I've ever read." See, Francis Plimpton, interview by Dennis J. O'Brien, 21 October 1969. John F. Kennedy Oral History Collection, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA.

66 GA Res. 1854 (XVII), 19 December 1962.

67 Rosalyn Higgins, "United Nations Peacekeeping," 329.

afloat was by no means immaterial.⁶⁸ Yet stiff Congressional opposition to the US contribution of more than one-third of the UN budget made it difficult to financially support options aimed to appease the poorer nations in the UN. For Congress, the source of consternation was not so much the amount of money being contributed to the UN, but rather the principle of other nations not accepting their “fair” share of responsibility.⁶⁹ These American domestic concerns left the US delegation at the UN without instructions from the State Department and made it difficult for the Western allies to formulate a unified approach to solving the peacekeeping issue. When American instructions did arrive, they sparked a division between the US, which preferred to deal only with the immediate financing for 1963, and Canada, which wanted a blanket agreement to cover future peacekeeping costs.⁷⁰ This split ultimately allowed the less-developed countries to gain the upper hand and undermine the Western view on collective responsibility.⁷¹ When the Special Session of the UN convened in mid-May 1963 to discuss the financing issue, the Working Group of 21 had no “definite conclusions” to present to the General Assembly, thus providing for a protracted and bitter debate.

By the end of Diefenbaker’s term in office, the financial situation at the UN was dire. UNEF and ONUC had accrued a deficit in excess of \$100 million, there were no provisions for financing the missions past 30 June 1963, and a special session of the General Assembly was scheduled to start on 14 May 1963, at which point several nations would be more than two years in arrears of their regular payments, making them eligible for the application of

68 As one US policy-maker pointed out: “The UN system spends \$508.3 million a year, \$311.5 million of which is U.S. contributions to various programs and projects.” Memo, Harlan Cleveland to Adlai Stevenson, Subject “The NSC Meeting on the UN”, June 22, 1962, NARA, RG 59, file United Nations, Box 222, Lot File 69D121, Records of the Policy Planning Staff 1962.

69 In many respects, the costs were inconsequential to the US, for as Adlai Stevenson admitted to his British counterparts, “the average U.S. contribution over the last 5 years formed only one third of 1% of the present U.S. defense budget.” Roger du Boulay, British Embassy Washington, to J.F. Wearing, Foreign Office, 14 March 1963, PRO, FO 371/172555.

70 Cabinet Paper, 26 February 1963, Financing of United Nations Peace-Keeping Operations, PRO, CAB 129/112.

71 American Ambassador to the UN, Adlai Stevenson, identified the problems in a cable from New York: “Cannot emphasize too strongly difficulty in which we find ourselves in Working Group having no instructions...Group members from Commonwealth and Western Europe are becoming quite unhappy about our posture and effect it may ultimately have on them. They state desire to join us in common position so that less-developed countries do not have free run of group. While they recognize we have Congressional problem, they becoming quietly resentful of fact that we, who initiated proposal for Working Group, are now completely inactive in it, with resulting possibility that there will result recommendation for special scale of assessments which other developed countries will dislike.” See New York to Secretary of State, 25 February 1963, NSF, JFK, Vol. II, UN Cables, Box 312, Subjects.

Article 19.⁷² The glorious peacekeeping vision that Lester Pearson had entrusted to Diefenbaker's government was now tangled in the purse strings of the UN member states. To be fair to Diefenbaker, Conservative policies had changed very little from their Liberal predecessors, though Conservative officials had some trouble in delivering their message and forging strong ties with their allies.⁷³ It was certainly with some relief that President Kennedy and Prime Minister Macmillan viewed the Canadian election results in April 1963.

With the return of Lester Pearson and the Liberals to power in 1963, there was no immediate and drastic adjustment in policy. However, the Canadian approach to the recalcitrant countries did stiffen, and a harder line was taken against those unwilling to accept collective responsibility for the UN's financial obligations. This harder line was not undertaken unilaterally but in concert with Canada's closest allies, the United States and Britain. While Canada continued to do its utmost to pursue a constructive approach to the financing of UNEF, it did so as a Western ally.

The current cry of "who will pay for peace?" may seem to be nickel and diming by self-interested nations, yet Diefenbaker's troubles show that governments are right to be wary. Even with the withdrawal of UNEF in 1967 – ten and a half years into the mission – a permanent solution to the financial predicament had yet to be found; only *ad hoc* remedies had kept troops in the field. Lacking the resolute support of all members of the Security Council, there was little that Canada – or the United Nations as an organisation – could do to force noncompliant states to financially support peacekeeping operations not perceived to be in their national interests. As a result, peacekeeping in the 1950s and early 1960s was forced to be reactionary and extemporised. Leaders of today continue to struggle to find a balance between peacekeeping mission requirements and the fiscal realities of deployment around the globe. They can take little solace in the knowledge that theirs is a struggle that has been with us since the blue helmets first landed in Egypt.

72 As of 27 April 1963, Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Haiti, Hungary, Paraguay, and the United Arab Republic were slightly more than two years in arrears of their UN dues.

73 The deterioration of relations between the Diefenbaker and Kennedy governments has been well documented. One of many examples is Charles Ritchie, who wrote in January 1962: "I hear on all sides that the present government is extremely unpopular in Washington and that the Americans say that every communication they receive from us is a protest or a complaint against them. Also, they are beginning to give us the cold shoulder and their reaction to any Canadian official visitor is a snub...The Americans in their present mood do not welcome advice from anyone, least of all from the present Canadian government." See Charles Ritchie, *Diplomatic Passport* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981), 186. Prime Minister Macmillan was also wary of Diefenbaker, writing after his trip to Ottawa in April 1962, "I am bound to say I formed an even less favorable impression of Mr. Diefenbaker's statesmanship than before. He is, I am afraid, a demagogue...." See "Note by the Prime Minister of a conversation with Mr. Diefenbaker in Ottawa on Monday, April 30, 1962," PRO, PREM 11/3648.