

the CIC and other interested groups in constructive discussions about Canadian Middle East activities. I would ask you not to lose sight of an abiding goal of this Government of Canada; to identify the practical measures that are needed, and on which Canadians can agree, and which would make a useful contribution to a peaceful and just solution to the conflicts of the region.

We are convinced that the basis exists for the continued pursuit of a constructive Middle East policy on which a broad range of Canadians agree. Let me suggest five priorities and outline what we have done and intend to do about them.

First, support for the right of Israel to exist within secure and recognized boundaries, is a keystone of Canadian policy. I am satisfied to note that domestically no significant body of opinion challenges this fundamental assumption. Canadian support for Israel means that we will stand behind Israel and support the principle of universality whenever Israel's participation is challenged in international bodies. It means we will support Israel's right to a fair hearing whenever its policies are challenged. But, as I have already indicated, support for Israel does not mean its leaders or its policies are immune from criticism.

A second emphasis of our policy is the profound desire of Canadians that the human rights of Palestinians be respected. We have made clear our view that Palestinians have legitimate individual and collective rights, including those to a homeland within a clearly defined territory, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the right to participate fully in negotiations affecting their future. I have sought also to ensure that we give tangible expression to our concern for their plight through modest, but not insignificant humanitarian and developmental assistance, in addition to representations on their behalf. This support, from a country well-known for its commitment to the secure existence of Israel, is a statement of our views on the nature of a peaceful settlement.

In 1988, a growing international and Canadian consensus takes the position that it is time to establish a peace of mutual recognition, based on territorial compromise and respect by Israelis and Palestinians for each other's legitimate rights. The Government of Canada encourages this view and our policy will continue to reflect it.

A third feature of the Canadian approach is to minimize rhetoric and, whenever possible, to emphasize practical action. Peacekeeping, best when it is discreet, illustrates this approach. Canadians understand the value of our contingents in three peacekeeping operations in the region and are proud of their accomplishments as we are proud of Canadian development assistance, including to Palestinians in the territories and refugee camps.