

power, it has no immediate political interests in the Middle East conflict. The Canadian Government has consistently taken the view that the interested parties themselves should seek a negotiated settlement on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

These resolutions may not be a complete blueprint for peace; they say little, for example, on the Palestinian question. But we believe that the two resolutions provide an effective framework for meaningful negotiations and state forcefully the fundamental principles that must be accepted by all parties if progress is to be made towards a peaceful settlement.

Canada has been a consistent contributor to United Nations peacekeeping in the Middle East since its inception. At present, we are providing the largest contingent of the United Nations Emergency Force in the Sinai. We consider that, through our participation in the United Nations Emergency Force and in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, we are assisting tangibly in maintaining the possibility of a final negotiated settlement. It would be a matter of serious concern to the Canadian Government, however, if it appeared that the relative stability that the United Nations peacekeeping efforts help provide lessened the urgency of comprehensive negotiations in the minds of the various parties.

The Canadian Government regards as a very positive and hopeful step last September's agreement between Egypt and Israel providing for a second Sinai disengagement. The role of President Sadat and his Government in joining with others to achieve this agreement has indeed been an important contribution to eventual peace. While the progress made by both parties in implementing the terms of the Sinai Disengagement Agreement has been encouraging, the Canadian Government considers it essential that the momentum of the painstaking search for an overall settlement be sustained.

When such fundamental issues as security, sovereignty, the fate of displaced peoples, mutual acceptance and recognition are involved, negotiations cannot but be difficult and complex, particularly when compounded by 30 years of strife and bitterness. However, the hope has to be kept alive that it will be possible for the parties concerned, including the Palestinian Arabs, to agree on a settlement. Much fortitude, patience and persistence, as well as respect for the dignity of all, are required; but the implications of failure for the area and for the world at large are so grave and so frightening that all concerned should be imbued with a spirit of compromise and accommodation.