

Like Canada, Israel is a land of immigrants which has become a home to a host of courageous spirits from around the world. Canada owes a great deal to the contribution of its Jewish community, whose members have distinguished themselves in an outstanding manner.

I can tell you, Mr. President, that there is hardly a dimension of our national life—from the arts, research, to medicine, the humanities, commerce, politics, to labour, and the law—that has not been improved and enriched because of the dynamic presence of a large and impressive Jewish community in Canada.

Jewish immigrants have laboured and sacrificed and have dreamt great dreams for their children—and on this continent so far away, their fondest hopes of freedom and tolerance, of fairness and opportunity have come true. May I tell you, Mr. President, on behalf of all Canadians, that Canada is an incomparably better nation because of their presence.

Canadians understand the aspirations that have shaped Israeli society from its origins. Canada and Israel share a fundamental commitment to liberty, through respect for individual rights and responsibilities. Common human values and democratic principles lie at the root of everything that unites us.

In all the world, there are few Parliaments as open, as democratic, and as fractious as the Knesset—although this House of Commons comes dangerously close on occasion. Too often for my liking, Mr. President. To listen to the raucous debates in the Israeli Parliament is to hear the pure and persuasive sounds of freedom.

And in all the world, there are few parallels to match the astonishing feat of Israel coming alive, of deserts being made to bloom, of a nation being bound together, in the shadow of hostility and in the agony of war.

The values on which Israel was founded, and which have been tempered in the fire of her national experience, have never been tested more than at this moment. Canadians are deeply concerned because of their friendship for Israel and because of their profound conviction that human rights must be respected.

Indeed, Mr. President, as you so eloquently stated, some three years ago, and I quote:

Israel must be the absolute denial of the theories of discrimination and racism, the loss of human dignity and the negation of man's honour.

The death of a child—Israeli or Palestinian—is an overwhelming human tragedy. Forbearance and restraint—even in the face of intense provocation—are the hallmarks of a strong and a confident nation. Canadians who understand and sympathize with Israel urge nonetheless moderation and reasonableness, in the belief that ultimately such a policy will bring about an equally responsible attitude on the other side.

The name of Israel resounds in human history with the promise of liberation. Mr. President, I can tell you on behalf of all Canadians that you can be assured of Canada's unswerving commitment to the security of Israel and to its status as a legitimate and independent state.

[*Translation*]

Canada is more anxious than ever to help create in your region a peace based on the security, well-being and legitimate rights of the people of Israel and her Arab neighbours.

[*English*]

Since the UN Security Council passed Resolution 242 in 1967, Canada has been working in the Middle East to promote a peace based on territorial accommodation, so that in exchange for occupied territories, Israel's legitimate rights will be recognized by its neighbours.

[*Translation*]

We have continually insisted that the Palestinians and the Arab countries recognize, unequivocally, Israel's right to exist. We have been encouraged by events in recent months which demonstrates this essential pre-condition is being met.

Our conviction is that recognition and respect for Israel's rights is the essential counterpart for the Palestinians realizing their own legitimate rights, including the right to participate fully in the determination of their own destiny and the future of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

We are pleased by the growing acceptance of this principle throughout your region. In this respect, we consider it significant that the Israeli Government has