

public opinion, altering the whole equation of the peace process. Of similar significance would be the unambiguous acceptance of these resolutions on the part of Israel, an acceptance which is now confused by Likud's intransigence on the very principle of territorial compromise.

In a very real sense, the popular uprising in the territories has been a watershed. A generation bred under occupation has declared its determination to resist. One fears that physically crushing it could have even more tragic results than the persistence of unrest. There is no turning back. A policy of indefinite control over the land without an acknowledgement of the rights of its inhabitants has been proven a failure. For the Palestinians, tolerable living conditions can never compensate for the absence of dignity and the freedom to order one's affairs according to one's own values.

From an Israeli perspective, a growing number of thoughtful spokesmen, such as Abba Eban, who was the guest of your last meeting, point out that demographic trends alone lead relentlessly to a situation where territory controlled by Israel will sooner or later either cease to be Jewish, or cease to be democratic. Obviously neither development is acceptable. The status quo ante, therefore, offers no acceptable solution whatever, to either side.

This is how I view the situation today. What Canadians are asking is: "Can Canada do anything about it?" Let me outline what we see as the Canadian approach to the Middle East in the present crisis. We must begin by acknowledging that Canada is not a super power and that our role in the Middle East is limited. This government has always been particularly attentive to avoid the Middle East conflict becoming a source of division in Canada. Part of our concern about the situation in the occupied territories comes from the realization that it gives rise to intense positions that could pit Canadians against one another. Out of a sense of the importance of Canadians continuing to talk to each other, we have developed the idea of a seminar to be held this Spring under the auspices of the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, to bring together individual Canadians of diverging points of view on these issues.

On the subject of dialogue, I am proud to recognize and encourage the CIC's contribution to setting a responsible, civilized tone to the debate of Middle East issues in Canada. I urge your organization to establish and maintain as many contacts as possible with persons and groups of different points of view on the challenges facing Israelis and Palestinians today. We will continue for our part to engage