

I profited by my visit to the region to review at first hand the circumstances to which the various elements of Canada's Middle East policy relate, and thus to evaluate the continuing validity of the basic elements of Canada's Middle East policy. I explained Canadian positions on major issues to my interlocutors in the five capitals I visited, and welcomed their reactions to our approach. You know the main elements of our policy - we have rehearsed them together frequently and it is not necessary for me to repeat them as we know them to exist. I explained them and discussed them with my hosts in the Middle East, and it is true that they did not always agree with the stand adopted by Canada on contentious issues. Our luncheon chairman said that at times even two Cape Bretoners can disagree, when he remarked that the Canada-Israel Committee and the Government of Canada may disagree on certain aspects of policy. That element of disagreement could be found in my tour as well. What I did find, and I say this quite honestly, what I did find reassuring was that my interlocutors did understand quite well what our policy was. I believe they also understood that it is balanced and fairminded. I returned to Canada with the view that it wasn't necessary to go back to the drawing board, that our attitudes to the problems of the region were sound. There was no need to review everything we had been doing, because I found that the principles under which we had been operating with countries in a different situation serve Canada well in Canada's effort to build bilateral relations in the area, and serve well and give impetus to our concern that we do everything possible for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace.

I know that if there is any concern of the Canada-Israel Committee and its members, it is the achievement of a just and comprehensive and lasting peace. I know that in respect of this particular objective, our unrelenting search for means of furthering the cause of peace and thereby the well-being of the people of Israel - the Canadian Government enjoys the unqualified support of the Canada-Israel Committee. Hence my particular satisfaction that I've had an opportunity today to share with you some of my anxieties, and to express to you my persistent hope that reason and peaceful accommodation may yet triumph over bitterness and violence.