

This is my third appearance at an annual meeting of the Canada-Israel Committee since becoming Secretary of State for External Affairs. I could hardly express more graphically my recognition of the CIC as a representative vehicle for the views and concerns, the hopes and dreams of so many Canadians who correctly identify our relationship with Israel as a cornerstone of this country's foreign policy. Canada's commitment to Israel, the nation and the ideals upon which it was created, has been a central feature of that policy ever since the birth of the State of Israel.

The appearance here last night of Prime Minister Mulroney, the first such attendance by a Canadian Prime Minister in the 16 years of existence of the CIC - speaks eloquently of his sensitivity to your concerns and aspirations.

In this the 40th year of the State of Israel, Canadians recall with pride that we were present at the beginning and before the beginning. Our efforts of those early days at the UN on behalf of the new Jewish state, spoke of the fundamental Canadian belief in an effective multilateral system within which the fledgling Israeli nation could develop to its full potential. Few Canadian leaders were as passionate in their feelings for Israel as The Right Honourable John Diefenbaker, the man who sparked the interest in politics of so many in the government and who shaped many of our perspectives in fundamental ways, including an enthusiasm for the generosity and idealism of the Zionist vision. It was so close to the dream he held for Canada. It is interesting and important to note that Prime Minister Mulroney speaks out instinctively and eloquently at critical moments in the evolution of Israel and the Jewish community. His record of friendship and leadership is unsurpassed.

I recall this to remind you that a strong Canada-Israel relationship has long been an inherent part of the fabric of the Canadian world-view. I do not intend to dwell on bilateral relations as I did with you fifteen months ago, but let me mention a few points to illustrate the vitality of those links.

- Trade between our two countries has been increasing steadily. Canadian exports stood at \$146 million last year, a 15% increase over the previous year. These gains are based on the strong commercial links which have been forged and which continue to expand.