

FOREWORD

This report deals with Canada's relations with countries of the Middle East and North Africa and touches on a number of complex subjects, many of which are evolving from day to day. In fact, the situation is changing so rapidly that the detailed comments in a report such as this inevitably are being overtaken by events. However, the Committee believes that its conclusions and recommendations have a continuing validity.

The Committee held 38 hearings in Ottawa and a Sub-committee travelled to five countries in the region. The Sub-committee's report was printed in the Committee's proceedings of 7 March 1984.

The report deals with a range of issues including Canadian peacekeeping in the Middle East, Canada's trade and representation with countries of the area, immigration links, Lebanon and the Iran-Iraq war. It gives particular emphasis to the Arab-Israeli dispute.

In undertaking this examination, the Committee was conscious that a function of such a study is to broaden understanding and promote dialogue among Canadians. This was the approach taken by the Committee in its previous study which examined the possibilities for a bilateral free trade agreement with the United States. In this case, the Committee has sought to enlarge knowledge in Canada of the intricacies of the problems which are at the root of the disputes of the area.

Since the issues are complex and the outcome critically important to the people of the area, the Committee moved slowly, through discussion, to try to reach balanced conclusions. While in a Committee report all members will not agree with every particular, in the Committee's view however, this report represents a balanced statement of the issues and presents a reasoned assessment of Canada's interests in the region.

I am grateful to all members of the Committee and especially to the Deputy Chairman, Senator Heath Macquarrie who chaired a number of important meetings in my absence and whose deep knowledge of this area of the world was most generously shared. The courtesy and understanding of all Members of the Committee, one to another, made it possible for us to find ways to resolve differences of opinion and to reach common ground. In addition, I wish to thank the staff for