

the PLO accepted conditions for opening direct talks with the US, including the acknowledgement of the right of Israel to exist and the renunciation of terrorism. The first round of these talks were said by both sides to have been useful. Also in December, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution by 138 votes to two to convene an international peace conference with the participation of the PLO, other parties to the dispute, and the permanent members of the Security Council. Inasmuch as the two opponents were the US and Israel, the Resolution is likely to remain without effect.

These various developments led to muted response in Canada. Mr. Clark welcomed the opening of direct talks between the US and the PLO but there was no indication that Canada might move in the same direction. Canada abstained on UN resolutions relating to a peace conference, finding herself in one case bracketed alone with Costa Rica. This reticence was puzzling. While there was no apparent reason why Canada should try to take a lead in these matters, it was equally unclear why we needed or should want to be out of step with the vast majority of UN members in endorsing a peace conference. Canada has good relations with Israel and our influence there, while obviously not decisive, could have impact. Israel has been sensitive to criticism from the West, including a courageous speech by Mr. Clark in March, about the treatment of Palestinians by Israeli authorities. One must hope, therefore, that Israel's friends, including Canada, will urge that country to reciprocate the steps which the PLO has now begun to take.

Elsewhere in the region, the ending of the Iran/Iraq war and what appeared to be a new realism in the foreign policies of Iran helped to brake the build-up of arms in the Gulf and in Saudi Arabia, to diminish the presence of