

The PLO's representative and its supporters with whom I spoke said that while the majority in the Organization are prepared to accept the State of Israel within its pre 1967 borders in the context of a settlement, the PLO could not unilaterally renounce its traditional objective of a secular state including Israel without any quid pro quo. The PLO argues that if it were to agree to recognize Israel without at the same time achieving recognition itself by Israel its bargaining power, as by far the weaker party, would be even further diminished. The shift in views within the PLO away from earlier total rejection of Israel is an encouraging development, but it is of comparatively recent vintage, and hardline groups within that organization continue to reject moderation. A much more definitive change in attitude is needed.

In addressing these issues the question of Canada's attitude toward the PLO must be considered. In doing so I have borne in mind on the one hand, the PLO's important leadership role among Palestinians and on the other its still ambiguous attitude towards Israel and its involvement in terrorism. In my view Canada should broaden contacts with the PLO on issues affecting negotiations and the peace process, with a view to encouraging that Organization towards greater moderation and realism and towards open acceptance of the legitimacy of the State of Israel. This will require frank communication and discussion. To play such a role there is no requirement that Canada formally recognize the PLO's claim to be "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians". Increasingly, however, the PLO has emerged not only in the perception of the Arab states but in much of the rest of the world as the only spokesman for the Palestinian people which enjoys the support of a large and significant body of Palestinian opinion.

We should also bear in mind that while the PLO has had long and close relations with the Soviets its avenues to dialogue with the West have been traditionally quite limited. More recently when openings to the Western European countries have been possible the PLO has not hesitated to respond. There is no doubt that this is in part because such contacts enhance the PLO's own international standing. At the same time the value of communication with the West as an influence toward moderation cannot be dismissed.

Discussions with the PLO should in no way affect a firm stand by Canada against any terrorist activities perpetrated by armed sub-groups of that organization. Such activities cannot be condoned and should be condemned. Canada should urge the termination of these activities, pointing out that they do nothing to facilitate the return to Arab rule of Palestinian territory, which is the stated goal of such action. Rather they reinforce the suspicions of many Israelis that the