

It is a great pleasure for me to be here in Israel with you tonight. A year ago I had the privilege of acting as host to your predecessor in Ottawa. At that time I promised him I would return to Israel, which I first visited in 1971. I have rarely enjoyed keeping a promise as much. This return of hospitality offers me an opportunity to meet you, Mr. Dayan, and to continue a personal exchange of views on the situation in the Middle East and on our bilateral relations. It is perhaps not surprising that we have talked most about the Middle East for this is a time of unusual challenge and hope as efforts to get constructive negotiations under way are pursued with new intensity. You have the good wishes of all Canadians in your quest for peace.

Canada was among the first to support the creation of this new state, and throughout the decades of your independence you have had the friendship of all Canadians. We have developed links of many kinds and at many levels; a constant flow of visitors in both directions, family ties, flourishing trade, and a multitude of personal, cultural and official contacts.

As old friends, which we are, I feel that we have developed a relationship of understanding and mutual respect that permits the kind of frank and open discussions we have had today. What marks our relationship above all and makes this kind of discussion possible, I think, is our shared democratic and social institutions and the tradition of working together for international stability and prosperity.

In no part of the world has stability been more elusive than in the Middle East. The problem of how to bring peace to this troubled region -- and the risk to world peace if we do not -- have preoccupied successive Canadian Governments over the past thirty years. The continuing presence of Canadian peacekeeping forces in this region is a tangible demonstration of our new concern. In the long run, however, stability in the Middle East cannot be ensured by mere peacekeeping. Instead, a comprehensive peace settlement is necessary which will bring about the normalization of relations between Israel and its neighbours, and which will open the way to reconciliation and economic and other contacts with all neighbouring peoples. Without minimizing the immense difficulties, I am convinced that there are opportunities now for progress towards peace that must be seized before they are lost.

I know that decisions are extraordinarily difficult when the security and sovereignty of states are at issue. It is my hope, however, that all the parties concerned in the Middle East problem will continue to have the courage and the breadth of vision necessary to make the difficult choices which will be required if the momentum