

Mr. President

For over forty years the United Nations and its member states have devoted substantial time and resources to the problems of the Middle East. Millions of words have been spoken. Hundreds of resolutions have been passed both in the Security Council and the General Assembly.

We have had some notable successes. I number among these Security Council Resolution 242 and our peacekeeping efforts, including many with which Canada has been associated. Beyond this the U.N. has served as a forum which has enabled views to be expressed and opinions heard.

In providing an ultimate court of appeal to world opinion this Assembly, over the years since it was created, has often given encouragement and hope to all those prepared to follow the path of negotiation and compromise.

We have however accomplished less than we had hoped for. Often we have been unable to set aside our differences. We have been unable to come to grips constructively and in an open-minded manner with the conflicts and the tensions which afflict the region. Indeed, Mr. President, I regret to say that on many occasions debate in this body may have exacerbated rather than assuaged regional problems. Through indulgence in base partisanship we have too often opened old wounds. When we do so we must understand that we may only be encouraging further suffering and violence.

For nearly forty years the dispute between Israel and its Arab neighbours has embittered relations between two historic peoples who have contributed richly to humankind in the arts, in science and in philosophy. Conflict and bloodshed have been lamentably frequent.

Mr. President, in human terms this dispute has caused untold hardship. Generations have come to maturity in the refugee camps of the Middle East. More must be done to assist those whose entire lives have been spent in deplorable conditions. They must be ensured a better future. They have legitimate aspirations. The international community, through its contributions and moral support, must help them. My Foreign Minister, Mr. Clark, devoted special attention to the tragedy of the refugees during his recent visit to the Middle East and to the concrete steps which might be taken to assist them. Canada is determined to continue to take practical measures to assist these men and women to live in dignity and to raise their children in a climate of hope.

Despite the efforts of the international community many of the younger generations among the refugees have become radicalized. Unable to satisfy legitimate grievances and resolve problems through dialogue and the political process they have turned to other means: the gun and the bomb. Our failure to help them realize their legitimate political aspirations has created an atmosphere in which it has been