

Council Resolution 242 which, in the Government's view, continues to constitute a valid framework upon which to base the negotiations required to achieve a just and equitable peace settlement. Canada has consistently refused to interpret this Resolution or to draw implications from it that were not immediately apparent from the very wording of the Resolution. To do otherwise would, I think, prejudice the shape of any potential settlement. We have insisted, however, on the necessity for all the parties to negotiate their differences. We know this is very difficult when the security and sovereignty of states are at issue. But is there any feasible alternative to negotiations if a solution is to be found which will be acceptable to all peoples of the area?

The Government has fully supported all initiatives to this end, including Dr. Kissinger's efforts to achieve a further partial settlement between Israel and Egypt. We regret the breakdown of these efforts and trust that new elements may allow their resumption. I understand that there has been a call for the reconvening of the Geneva Conference on the Middle East. For my part, I would hope that an acceptable formula can be found which would allow for the participation at the Conference of all interested parties. What seems to me important is to build upon the stated willingness of each side to seek paths towards peace. To this end and depending on developments, a return to Geneva -- assuming that adequate preparations have been made -- might assist in the process towards a final negotiated settlement of differences.

It is clear that in the continuing efforts to achieve an eventual negotiated peace the Palestinians must play a role. Indeed, the re-emergence of the Palestinian factor in the Middle East equation culminated, as you are all aware, in a major debate at the last session of the UNGA. I reiterated at the time of the UN debate Canada's support for the right of the Palestinian people to be heard and participate in negotiations concerning their future status. At the same time, however, I firmly maintained the Government's refusal to comment on the form Palestinian representation should take in any such future talks. I trust I made clear the Government's view that this must remain a question to be resolved by the parties concerned. The Palestinian issue is not one which can be settled separately but must be placed in the context of the efforts to work towards an agreed and acceptable peace settlement to all parties concerned.