

impossible for the bargaining ever to get started. There is no basis for serious negotiations without a clear understanding of two points: the reality of Israel as an independent state consistent with Security Council Resolution 242 and the need for the Palestinian people to participate in the process of developing an appropriate structure for their political self-expression within a suitable territorial framework.

Except for Palestinian participation, Security Council Resolution 242 provides all the necessary elements of a basis for negotiations. Israel must withdraw from territories occupied in 1967, but only as a part of a process that establishes secure and recognized borders for all states in the region and that provides effective recognition for the right of all these states, including Israel, to live in peace. Resolution 242 was a landmark of general agreement on the essential framework for a just and lasting peace. It should be neither tampered with nor distorted. It should be used as the basis for moving ahead toward a negotiated solution.

The Geneva Conference, while not the only conceivable forum for negotiations, is the only one in being. Rather than try to reconstruct it, we urge the parties to make use of it with all the urgency that the situation demands.

Let the parties and the international community, therefore, do what is necessary in order to permit the launching of the negotiating process and to seize now an opportunity which, if it is not grasped, will surely pass just as surely to be followed by the outbreak of renewed hostilities and destruction which it is our common responsibility to prevent.