

I recognize that strongly held positions and attitudes have developed over the course of the long struggle between Arabs and Israelis. I do not wish to diminish their importance or the sincerity with which they are held. After the Jewish fate in the Holocaust, four wars in little over thirty years with their neighbours and frequent terrorist activity directed against them, the Israelis' concern about security is fully understandable. It is natural, too, that Arabs, including the Palestinians, should have vivid memories of their sufferings in those same four wars and in more recent Israeli military actions in Lebanon. Yet without a real willingness by both Arabs and Israelis to make serious compromises to attain peace, progress achieved to date through Camp David may well be jeopardized, and the potential for renewed conflict will be increased. While it is not for Canada to suggest how these compromises should be made, we do have, it seems to me, as a country whose objective is peace, some responsibility to stress to the parties that difficult decisions cannot be indefinitely postponed or abandoned. If in the coming months these decisions were not made and, as a consequence, the present negotiations were to fail, another mechanism to facilitate the search for peace would ultimately have to be developed. Although then, of necessity, this would take place in an atmosphere of renewed mistrust which Camp David's failure would have created.

#### Negotiations and the Palestinians

For negotiations to be successful an acceptable form of representation for the Palestinian people must be found. All Palestinians whom I met affirmed that the Palestine Liberation Organization was the only body which could speak for them. I was told categorically by Palestinians on the West Bank that their local leadership would not negotiate in any way without at least tacit concurrence of the PLO. This clearly constitutes a difficult problem. On the one hand, the Palestinians will be represented only in a manner they accept; on the other, Israeli concern about the PLO cannot be dismissed as irrelevant as some tend to do.

Israeli refusal to agree to negotiations including the PLO may stem in part from fear that this could imply possible willingness to consider a principal goal of the PLO, the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state on the West Bank and in Gaza. This is a concept which Israeli governments have stated they are not prepared to accept. My discussions with Israelis convinced me, however, that their antipathy also springs from the bitter and brutal experience of terrorist activities which many have felt in their own lives; from the PLO's formally professed goal of establishing a secular state which would include Israel; and from what they see as the Organization's menacing ties with the Soviet bloc.