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TOWARD A MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT

A Statement in the House of Commons on April 1, 1971, by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp.

...The present stage of efforts to make progress toward a lasting Middle East peace settlement involves both continuing dangers and challenging opportunities. The absence since March 7 of formal and mutual agreements to maintain the cease-fire underlines the persisting risk that hostilities might at some point be renewed unless the momentum of the current peace initiative is maintained and reinforced. But there are encouraging possibilities for such progress toward peace, which I hope will be taken up and exploited by the parties.

The Government of Canada has followed with close interest the latest sequence of exchanges under the aegis of Ambassador Jarring, the United Nations Secretary-General's special representative charged with promoting a peace settlement on the basis of Resolution 242, which...was drafted with the help of Canada, which was then on the Security Council. Although Canada is not directly involved in these efforts and we are, therefore, not informed of all aspects of the exchanges, certain observations can fairly be made on the basis of development known to us.

I should like first to reiterate the Canadian Government's full support of Ambassador Jarring's persistent and untiring efforts to assist the parties toward a settlement based on the Security Council resolution. The House is well aware of the formidable nature of the issues to be resolved. Any expectation of rapid advance toward agreement would be illusory. But some encouragement may be drawn from the Secretary-General's report of March 5 on the course of Ambassador Jarring's mission.

In drawing attention to the intensity of recent efforts to move toward a peaceful solution, the Secretary-General noted that general agreement had been found on some of the problems to be settled. He also cited with satisfaction the positive reply given by the United Arab Republic on specific questions raised by Ambassador Jarring. As the House is aware, the U.A.R. response included an explicit expression of readiness to enter into a peace agreement with Israel, subject, of course, to mutually-acceptable terms of