

MIDDLE EAST

7. The Situation in the Middle East

Canada's position on the Situation in the Middle East is that Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 provide a valid framework for a just and equitable solution to the Middle East conflict. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of every state in the region must be respected. Canada opposes any moves which would challenge the right to exist of Israel, or of any other state in the region. At the same time, the concerns of the Palestinian people must be taken into account in any peace settlement. They should be heard in any negotiations affecting their future. Canada believes, as well, that the aspirations of the Palestinian people in terms of developing an appropriate structure and territorial foundation for their political self-expression should be taken into account as part of an overall settlement.

The following statement was made by Ambassador W.H. Barton, Permanent Representative of Canada to the UN, during the debate in Plenary on the Situation in the Middle East, November 24, 1977.

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I would like to begin by asserting once again our hope that a just and lasting peace will be achieved in the Middle East in the not too distant future. It is generally agreed that certain principles serve as a foundation for negotiations. The settlement of the Middle East conflict must be based on the principles of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. Israel must withdraw from territories occupied in 1967, as 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 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 used as the basis for moving ahead toward a negotiated solution, which to be durable must satisfy the concerns for security of all the parties, and meet the concerns of the Palestinian people.

We reaffirm at this time that we consider the most appropriate means for achieving peace is for the parties directly concerned to negotiate, choosing for themselves the vehicles they wish to use for those negotiations. Recent events seem to us to be leading towards the reconvening of the Geneva Conference. As we have stated before, the Geneva Conference provides machinery by which to achieve an overall settlement and we favour using that machinery. That conference appears to be within reach. The momentum for peace negotiations seems to have begun but it has taken place outside the halls of the United Nations. The aim of any debate in the United Nations on Middle East questions should in our view be to further the achievement of peace in the region.