

A fourth focus of Canadian involvement in the region is human rights. I believe Canadians see these rights as being neither divisible nor negotiable. We have spoken to them in many parts of the world. In many of these cases we have had the interest and cooperation of the CIC and its constituent organizations. I very much hope we may come to develop a similar understanding about the treatment of Palestinians by Israeli authorities. I raise this in the belief that there should be frankness between us on a subject which inescapably is now on both of our agendas. The long term health of the Canada-Israel relationship depends upon our facing these and similar issues squarely.

Finally, mindful of our own injunction against outside prescriptions, may I say a word about the fundamental preoccupation for regional peace which unites us today. Canada has long called for the active involvement of the United States and welcomes the determination of Secretary Shultz to explore the means of moving the peace process forward and with the urgency it deserves. It was in this spirit that Prime Minister Mulroney recently wrote to Prime Minister Shamir urging him to be forthcoming and imaginative and politically courageous in responding to the new American peace initiative. It is only in this way that Israel may be clearly seen to be prepared, from a position of strength, to take those risks which are required if peace is to be achieved. We encourage those Israelis who have demonstrated the courage to support this process.

Canada is firmly of the view that peace hinges on territorial compromise. Security Council Resolution 242, which expresses the principle of the exchange of land for peace, offers the best hope of breaking the vicious cycle of violence and of achieving resolution. The leadership of Israel well knows that this is our position, and that it represents the honest assessment of a friend. Palestinian leaders likewise know where Canada stands. Events in the West Bank and Gaza have demonstrated that intransigence on the issue of land offers at best a costly illusion of security. It promises a future of strife and, ultimately, a crisis of identity for Israel.

I ask members of the CIC to join their government and to carry a similar heartfelt message to their friends in Israel at all levels of society. For my part, I undertake to convey a related message to Palestinians with whom we are in contact, that a confirmation of their own willingness to recognize the existence of the Israeli state, and thereby themselves to accept territorial compromise, could be of momentous importance as the deadline for critical decisions approaches. I will again call upon Palestinians to resist the all too easy path of violence and to seek instead peaceful solutions to their longstanding problems and grievances.