

Adjournment Debate

states including the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan have agreed on designating the PLO as the Palestinian spokesman. The Palestinians under military occupation of Israel, or in the far-flung, dreary refugee camps of the Middle East, have no representative institutions. How then does Canada see them represented. By Jordan? Jordan has itself agreed that the PLO should go to Geneva. Do we envisage them being represented by Israel? It would be strange if the Minister were exalting the right of conquest at a U.N. meeting, and I cannot believe that the minister meant that.

In the light of statements by Israeli leaders that they would never talk to the PLO, what is the effect of the minister's declaration that Israel is an essential determinant of how the Palestinians should be represented at Geneva?

If Israel is given the authority to make the decision on this matter it is clear that the Palestinians will not be represented. Without recognition of the Palestinian cause I fear there will no peace in the Middle East. It is not in Israel's interest that the tension be heightened and the bitter animosity prolonged. It may well be that the minister's statement, more pro-Israeli in some respects than that of the United States, will not in the long run be so helpful.

The situation in the Middle East is complex enough to deter anyone from proffering simplistic solutions. I believe, however, some realities must be faced. By agreeing to sit down with Israel at Geneva the neighbouring Arab states have shown a realism they have for a long time avoided. By going into conference they are, ipso facto, recognizing Israel. Despite all the agonies of the 1940's, the lack of consultation with the Palestinians, the terrorism, the violence, I think the Arabs must now face reality and recognize Israel as a fact of life.

The Israelis must, on their part, recognize that they do not have the right to borders of their own choosing. More fundamental, they must recognize that the Palestinians are a people. The United Nations which set up an Israel also created a new Palestine. Canada, as a United Nations member, has some responsibility, and I was surprised that we voted against observer status for a people to whose future the United Nations made such a fateful contribution in 1948. Not being a state, how else can these people be heard at the international forum which made such traumatic decisions on their fate 26 years ago? It must not be forgotten that the Palestinians were unheard in 1948. Are we to go on forever acting as if they did not exist, did not in fact exist when Israel was created?

I close with my renewed plea for a more open-handed view, a recognition that while UN resolution 242 calls for a situation helpful to Israel, it also deals with territories and rights of other people. Until we have a new measure of compassion, realism, fairness and moderation, this troubled region will threaten the people of its own area and of the whole world.

The Middle East situation is one of immense sensitivity and explosive possibilities. It is an area concerning which

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

we must all seek eternally and energetically for helpful contributions. In the emotion-laden atmosphere surrounding this fearful question there are occasional contributions and utterances which are not helpful. While I have never had anything but kindly feelings for Israel, where I was so well received a few years ago, I think its president's threats of atomic warfare were regrettable. Unfortunate, too, is a tendency to denigrate and sneer at the nations comprising the majority which voted for observer status at the United Nations.

Not for a moment would I accuse the minister or his parliamentary secretary of dealing in such diabolic dialectics, but I do deplore those who sneeringly toss off the majority as merely a union of Africans, Arabs and Asiatics. Such racist elitism is the very antithesis of what the UN should stand for, and should be abhorrent to all liberal internationalists.

I fervently hope that reason, not racism, will prevail, and that, in the words of the Psalm of David, mercy and truth shall meet together. To this end I hope Canada will commit itself.

Mr. Herb Breau (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I must say at the outset I have no difficulty in sharing the sentiments of the hon. member, my friend from a neighbouring province, on the first part of his speech in which he expressed his sentiments regarding the Palestinians. I can tell the House and the hon. member that those sentiments are shared by many members in this House, and on this side of the House. I do not see any difficulty in reconciling the proposal of the government on this particular issue with the sentiments of the hon. member, which are that there should be understanding and compassion toward the Palestinians.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) indicated in his reply to the hon. member on November 26—to use his terms—that it is self-evident that unless there is concurrence on the part of Israel with regard to with whom it will negotiate or with whom it expects to negotiate there is little prospect for a negotiated Middle East settlement. We must understand that the question at issue is the negotiation of a peaceful settlement. I know of no peaceful settlement which can be achieved without negotiation.

The question of which group, body or organization or combination thereof will speak for the Palestinians is one which must be decided by the parties directly involved. It seems both obvious and reasonable to expect, and in my view is essential, that all parties which must be involved in a negotiated settlement of the conflict must recognize each other as parties to the negotiations. Any other option could not reasonably give hope of a peaceful settlement which, by its own definition, must be a negotiated settlement.