

- More significant still, Canada and Israel are now exporting a greater volume and variety of finished goods to one another than ever before. And we have broadened the nature of our relationship through exchanges of technological know-how.

- I am also pleased to report progress in the implementation of my agreement of April 1986 with Mr. Shamir, who was then Foreign Minister, that Canada and Israel should cooperate in development projects in the Third World. That has led us to explore how each country might best contribute to a training centre in Cameroon, in co-operation with that country.

Your Government of Canada and the Government of Israel are committed to building upon what have become mature, mutually beneficial relations; links that complement the extraordinarily close person-to-person bonds which are the hallmark of our relationship.

But as worthy of comment as these developments undoubtedly are, my wish to be with you today stems rather from a shared sense of the gravity of the moment, as daily we watch events unfold which affect the well-being and the future of the Jewish nation. Many of you have devoted a good portion of your lives in support of Israel. The idea and the ideal of Israel claim an important place in your hearts and your minds as they do for other staunch friends of Israel, Jewish and non-Jewish. I feel part of that experience.

Despite the effort and the fidelity of its friends, Israel still is not at peace with its neighbours. Indeed, now, in the territories it has occupied since 1967, it is wracked with turmoil of a nature it has never before experienced. Since early December, Israeli forces have been engaged in a bloody and demoralizing conflict with Palestinians living in Gaza and on the West Bank. Violence in the occupied territories, committed by either side in the dispute, tears at our conscience and our hearts as it tests our convictions.

Many of you have contacted the Prime Minister or myself to comment on the wrenching events of these past three months. Some 2000 Canadians have so far taken the time to write to one or the other of us. A good proportion of these letters are thoughtful. Most attempt to be constructive. Quite a few were obviously painful to write. Their common denominator is concern, and the expectation that their government, while ever mindful of historical circumstances, nonetheless will be forthright in addressing what they regard as a critical situation in a positive manner.