

Canada's desire for a Middle East peace settlement is real and steadfast. It has led us to make and to continue our peacekeeping contribution there. Beyond the short term such a contribution can be fully justified only if it helps to provide the time and regional stability for negotiation of a settlement. A year or two ago, it was possible to perceive a link between Middle East peacekeeping and progress in the process of peace negotiations put in train by the mediation efforts of the United States. Since then, unfortunately, that process has lain moribund. Now, with renewed hopes for Lebanon and therefore for the entire region, the time seems opportune for the reactivation of comprehensive negotiations towards a final settlement.

In the view of the Canadian Government, it is of the utmost urgency that a new start be made. There exists now agreement on the framework for negotiations: first, Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 have obtained general agreement. Secondly, all parties have agreed that the Palestinians should be heard and participate in any discussion affecting their future. What, then, are the remaining obstacles? We know that they are procedural in form.

It would, of course, be naive to deny that the existing procedural difficulties cloak deeply felt aspirations and apprehensions. But this fact simply confirms the necessity for particular efforts by the key parties to clear away procedural obstacles and permit negotiations to be resumed. We all know that the most important obstacles are at the present time: the difficulty of arranging for the effective representation of the Palestinian people in the discussions and negotiations that will play a central role in determining their future, on the one hand; on the other, the need for unequivocal acceptance by all parties of the existence of the State of Israel as a sovereign and independent state in the Middle East.

The task of overcoming these obstacles ought not be beyond human ingenuity. It will require imagination, flexibility, determination. It will demand the wisdom, on the part of all concerned, to refrain from making it impossible to begin constructive negotiations by insisting on procedural considerations that would tend to predetermine their conclusions.

For negotiations to be successful they must begin, and they must begin with clear indications from both sides of the will to make necessary concessions. To save, as "bargaining points" for use at a later stage, concessions that both sides know to be inevitable, can only make it