

closer ties and, working with the countries and peoples of both the Middle East and Maghreb, to achieve even greater mutual benefit. The government is committed to this objective and we are gratified that Canadians at large increasingly share the same view. We will look forward to the results of your enquiry with the deepest interest in the expectation that they will contribute significantly to the furtherance of Canada's long-range objectives and to the heightening of public awareness of the opportunities as well as the problems of the area.

**Arab-Israeli
dispute**

I should like to turn to the Canadian view on the Arab-Israeli dispute. Peace in the Middle East can come only through negotiations and the Arabs and Israelis have to be encouraged to sit down together to work out their differences. Following a balanced and impartial policy towards the Israelis and the Arabs, including the Palestinians, we will do what we can to promote compromise and moderation but Canadian influence will obviously be limited as we are not a central player.

We support the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. We strongly opposed the Israeli invasion of Lebanon which we considered neither justified nor likely to achieve its stated objective. The Prime Minister deplored the invasion in writing to Prime Minister Begin. We continue to support Israel's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Lebanon. The withdrawal of Syrian and Palestine Liberation Organization forces is obviously equally important for the return of peace and stability to Lebanon. Negotiations to achieve the withdrawal of forces should be pursued vigorously and should not be delayed by attempts to achieve unrelated objectives. We deplored Israel's unjustified occupation of West Beirut. We were shocked and revolted by the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut.

Since the beginning of the invasion we have contributed \$3.05 million in humanitarian assistance for Lebanon. As requirements become clearer, we shall be considering what further contributions might be made to aid the Lebanese and the Palestinians in Lebanon.

Peacekeeping

We have had discussions with a number of countries about peacekeeping in Lebanon but Canada has not been asked to participate in the Multinational Force, MNF. It would be premature to speculate about what the Canadian government's reaction might be if invited to participate in either the Multinational Force or a changed United Nations Force in Lebanon.

On the conflict in general we support a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement based on Security Council Resolution 242, including the right of all countries to live within secure and recognized boundaries and the requirement for Israeli withdrawal from "territories occupied" in 1967. The final status of the occupied territories must be decided by negotiations. We oppose attempts to prejudge the outcome of negotiations through actions on the ground or one-sided resolutions in international fora. We support the security, well-being and rights of Israel as a
