

- Q. Mr. MacEachen, you mentioned earlier that Canada has an interest in contributing to the process in Central America. Did you make any commitments of what we might contribute there, was there any response from Mr. Schultz in terms of an interest in the Canadian contribution in Central America?
- A. (M) No, I have made no commitments. We haven't had any request even from the Contadora Group and if a request for assistance or a contribution were made, we would obviously consider it. But without knowing much more about the circumstances that might prevail it wouldn't be possible to give any commitment in advance.
- Q. Mr. MacEachen, a moment ago Mr. Schultz suggested that one of the problems in the Middle East is the withdrawal of foreign forces out of Lebanon. You're going to be going to Damascus and I believe Syria was mentioned as a specific example. Could you enlarge a little bit on exactly what it is you will be talking about in Damascus and how the Canadian position is either similar to or closely aligned to that of the American position and what sort of effect or effort you will be able to bring in Damascus to restore some sort of order. What are you going to be saying.
- A. (M) The first point is that this is the first time that a Canadian Minister has ever visited Damascus in an official capacity, and has ever had a dialogue with the Government of Syria and I think that is a very important objective in itself for Canada now to engage in a discussion to understand more of what Syria wants to do, why it is pursuing certain courses. That is a very important object in itself that I intend to pursue. But beyond that I do not intend to present a proposal or to attempt to inject Canada into a situation for which we do not have an obvious role.
- Q. I would like to ask the Minister why it is that we do not have an obvious role when this is a situation that has been going on for years and Canada has a well formulated foreign policy and at least you can explain to them what the Canadian position is or attempt to do something. Is this surely just a fact finding mission after decades of knowledge between the two countries. Are you not going to say something that would be of a definitive value in putting forward or extending a peacekeeping role.