

Sinai, this task of the UN forces takes on a crucial importance.

The Government has not attempted to assert any preconceived notions about what might constitute the details of an eventual peace agreement. The parties themselves must work these out through negotiations on the basis of Security Council Resolution 242, which, in the Government's view, continues to constitute a valid framework upon which to base the negotiations required to achieve a just and equitable peace settlement. Canada has consistently refused to interpret this resolution or to draw implications from it that were not immediately apparent from the wording of the resolution. To do otherwise would, I think, preclude the shape of any potential settlement. We have insisted, however, on the necessity for all the parties to negotiate their differences. We know this is very difficult when the security and sovereignty of states are at issue. But is there any feasible alternative negotiations if a solution is to be found that will be acceptable to all peoples of the area?

The Government has fully supported all initiatives to this end, including Dr. Kissinger's efforts to achieve a further partial settlement between Israel and Egypt. We regret the breakdown of these efforts and trust that new elements may allow their resumption. I understand that there has been a call for the reconvening of the Geneva Conference on the Middle East. For my part, I would hope that an acceptable formula can be found which would allow for the participation at the conference of all interested parties. What seems to me important is to build upon the stated willingness of each side to seek paths towards peace. To this end, and depending on developments, a return to Geneva -- assuming that adequate detailed preparations have been made -- might assist the process towards a final negotiated settlement of differences.

It is clear that, in the continuing efforts to achieve an eventual negotiated peace, the Palestinians must play a role. Indeed, the re-emergence of the Palestinian factor in the Middle East equation culminated, as you are all aware, in a major debate at the last session of the UN General Assembly. I made clear at that time Canada's position on the issue. I reiterated Canada's support for the right of the Palestinian people to be heard and to participate in negotiations concerning their future status. At the same time, however, I firmly maintained the Government's refusal to comment on the form Palestinian representation should take in any such future talks. I trust I made clear the Government's view that this must remain a question to be resolved by the parties concerned. The Palestinian issue is not one that can be settled separately but must be placed in the context of the efforts to work towards an agreed and acceptable peace settlement to all parties concerned.