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## THE SEARCH FOR A SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

*The following is an address by Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, at the Negev Dinner in Winnipeg on June 5:*

One of the things that has been firmly impressed upon me in the past year is that the Secretary of State for External Affairs is a focus for everybody's worries about the state of the world. Some people agonize over the war in Vietnam, others about Czechoslovakia. Many are troubled about poverty in Asia, civil war in Nigeria or revolution in Latin America. They all want me to ensure that their concern is reflected in Canada's foreign policy.

It is good that our people show such lively interest in the troubles of their fellow human beings elsewhere in the world. I assure you that I fully accept the responsibility of being a kind of national worrier. The difficult part, of course, is to find practical ways in which the concern of the Canadian people can be translated into helpful action by Canada as a nation in complex situations around the world. In relation to the Middle East, for example, there is no question of the immense sympathy in Canada for Israel as well as our compassion for the people of the Arab countries. Individual Canadians can, and do, make their own contributions in various ways and the Canadian Government constantly seeks to assist in the search for a lasting peace. Yet, of the international controversies which have attracted attention since the Second World War, few have proven as intractable as the Arab-Israeli dispute. The 21 years since the establishment of the State of Israel have seen three major outbreaks of hostilities and an ebb and flow of violence in between.

Two years have now elapsed since the fighting in 1967 and violent clashes continue in the region at a level that is without precedent except during time

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of war. It is a depressing and, indeed, a dismaying record when we recall the high hopes entertained by us all 21 years ago as we welcomed Israel into the family of nations. The hopes that an early reconciliation would be effected, that the Arab states and Israel would come to live in harmony to their mutual benefit, and that agreement on just arrangements would enable all those - on both sides - who had suffered from fear, deprivation and homelessness to assume lives of dignity and self-respect.

### PAST 20 YEARS

Too many of these hopes have been disappointed. Yet we should not ignore what was accomplished during the past 20 years. The people of Israel have accomplished remarkable nation-building feats. There have been periods of calm. Through the United Nations, efforts have been made by the international community to promote conditions of peace and to alleviate human suffering, particularly by assisting the Arab refugees. The United Nations did contribute to the maintenance of an equilibrium in the region for some years. Wiser counsels among the