

One area in which Resolution 242 has generally come to be considered lacking is in its treatment of the Palestinians, who are referred to in the Resolution only as refugees. The increasing emergence of a Palestinian national consciousness since 1967 has made it clear that the political future of the Palestinian people is an issue which must be directly addressed in negotiations. Indeed a solution of this issue is basic to the solution of the Middle East dispute as a whole, and thus to Israel's own well being and security. Representatives of all Arab governments I met were categorical in asserting that there cannot be peace in the area until the rights of the Palestinians are recognized.

The Camp David Accords reflect the importance of the Palestinian question. They state that the solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute evolving from the negotiations envisaged in the Accords must "recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements". I believe Canada should support the Palestinians right to a homeland as well as their rights to be heard and participate in the determination of their own future. Successive Canadian governments have agreed to communique to this effect at Commonwealth and NATO meetings. Canadian support for this position should be made manifest. What form this homeland should take, its precise boundaries and whether it would constitute an independent state or a federated or other part of an existing state, is not for Canada to decide, but is for the Palestinians themselves and their neighbours, including Israel, to determine in negotiations.

Mechanisms for Negotiations

Several sets of negotiations between Israel and Arab states have taken place since Resolution 242 was adopted in 1967. Attempts were made beginning in 1969 with the American "Rogers Plan" to establish the foundation for a comprehensive peace settlement between Israel and her neighbours, but talks were finally deadlocked in 1971. Following the 1973 war negotiations began for the purposes of concluding limited disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt, and Israel and Syria. This "step by step" approach, aimed at achieving eventually a comprehensive peace through a series of limited settlements, also resulted in a second Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreement in 1975 but no further partial accords were concluded. Attempts were then made to reconvene the multinational Geneva Conference as a full peace conference to negotiate a comprehensive settlement. These efforts were frustrated because of the inability of the parties to agree on questions of Palestinian representation.