

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

1. As a western industrialized nation, Canada has a deep interest in the stability of the Middle East and is concerned that a major international confrontation should not erupt from the several conflicts which persist in this volatile region including the Arab-Israeli dispute, the continuing turmoil in Lebanon and the Iran-Iraq war.

2. **The Arab-Israeli Conflict**

In the Arab-Israeli dispute, Canadians like others face the difficult task of assessing an issue based on two interpretations of deeply-rooted historical experiences. The problem is exacerbated because both sides appear to have right, or an element of right, on their side. This report frequently records opposing perceptions held by the parties involved in the Arab-Israeli dispute as these are important if one is to understand the positions which each has adopted.

The hearings and the Sub-committee's travels in the Middle East have convinced the Committee that there can be no resolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute until there has been agreement on how to accommodate the Palestinian people while at the same time ensuring the security and legitimacy of Israel. Palestinians are too numerous, too articulate and determined, too well-connected to the rest of the Arab world to make it possible for Israel to come to some agreement with its Arab neighbours that would ignore the Palestinians.

By early 1985 there were a series of developments which rekindled hopes for the peace process in the Middle East. Yet there still are many serious problems delaying the peace process. There are certain steps, in the Committee's view, that the parties centrally involved could be encouraged to take that could advance the peace process:

- a) **Restraining the harsh rhetoric**

The Committee recognizes that even with some forces for moderation on both sides, the gulf between the two remains very wide. It has not been helped by the use of strong rhetoric by the protagonists which makes accommodation almost impossible. Restraint on both sides could help calm the suspicions generated by years of bitter conflict. It is to be hoped that the softening noted in 1985 of the earlier harsh tones of rhetoric of the two main contending parties will persist, thereby easing the path to the bargaining table.