

peace process have occurred in recent months but the window for progress is very narrow and if opportunities are not grasped by the parties quickly, the deadly cycle may simply repeat itself yet another time. While there may be some who would be comfortable with a perpetuation of this state of affairs, I think the vast majority of people directly concerned must want an honourable and peaceful end to the conflict if only one can be found that protects their vital interests.

In closing, I wish to recall and at the same time pay tribute to perhaps the historically most significant achievement in the Middle East in the past year - the final withdrawal of Israel from the Sinai and the peaceful restoration of that territory to Egyptian sovereignty in accordance with the peace treaty made possible by Camp David.

This event provides evidence of Israel's eagerness to act for peace when an Arab country indicates a willingness to negotiate. As that act showed, a settlement in the Middle East between Israelis and Arabs is possible once the will is there on both sides, and once there is a beginning of sympathetic understanding by each side of the aspirations and the fears of the other.

It is this fact that we should bear constantly in mind when events seem to suggest that there is an unbridgeable gap between present adversaries. It provides the hope on which we should all be trying to build.