

excellent. As you have pointed out, many thousands of Canadians travel to Israel each year, and these visits are reciprocated by the broad range of Israelis who travel in turn to Canada. On the economic front, we have witnessed last year yet another increase in our two-way trade.

During the course of my trip to the Middle East, I have visited several of Israel's Arab neighbours. Consequently, the magnitude of the problems associated with the search for peace in this area of the world is fully in my mind. Canada's fundamental and unalterable concern has always been to make its contribution towards a just and durable peace. We have tried to do this in a very direct way through our participation in the United Nations Emergency Force in the Sinai, which is larger than that provided by any other country, and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force on the Golan Heights. If these forces can continue to provide a measure of stability between Israel and its neighbours and can help to establish and maintain a climate in which substantive negotiations can take place, Canada fully intends to maintain its contribution.

The Government and the people of Canada supported the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, its right to exist as an independent state in the Middle East and the right of its people to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, and that still continues as the policy of the Government of Canada. In no way has this support ever been directed against Israel's neighbours. Indeed, Canada has sought to maintain a policy of balance and objectivity in the Middle East conflict. We firmly believe that all the peoples of this region have the same right to peaceful and prosperous development behind secure boundaries.

The Canadian Government has never attempted to assert any preconceived notions as to what might constitute the details of an eventual Middle East peace agreement. While the achievement of a just and equitable settlement has always been a major concern in Canada, it has been my Government's view that the parties themselves must solve their problems through negotiations on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and all the principles they embody, as this continues to constitute a valid framework upon which to base the deliberations required to achieve a just and lasting settlement. Canada has, therefore, welcomed the achievement of a second interim accord between Israel and Egypt as an important contribution in the negotiating process.

I know that decisions are very difficult when the security and sovereignty of states are at issue. It is my hope that the parties concerned will continue to find the fortitude necessary to make the

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