

# Statement

Secretary of  
State for  
External Affairs



# Déclaration

Secrétaire d'État  
aux Affaires  
extérieures

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AS DELIVERED

A STATEMENT BY  
THE HONOURABLE PERRIN BEATTY,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,  
FOLLOWING THE SIGNING OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN  
ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

WASHINGTON, D.C.  
September 13, 1993

What seemed unthinkable in the past is today reality. The signing of the peace agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO] is a truly historic development in the course of Middle East relations.

What we are seeing represents the triumph of trust over cynicism in this war-torn region. I congratulate the Israeli government and the leadership of the PLO for their keen understanding of what is best for their people. Their courageous actions have resulted in measures that have opened up prospects for hope and peace throughout the Middle East.

Canada's attendance at the ceremony, as one of only twelve countries invited at the foreign ministerial level, reflects the credentials we have earned over the past 45 years through our commitment to the Middle East and our having consistently kept the door open to all parties in the region.

We are also here because this breakthrough agreement is an outcome of the multilateral negotiations and the networking they facilitated, in which Canada played a substantial role as gavel of Working Group on Refugees.

Many of my predecessors, such as Lester Pearson and Joe Clark, strived tirelessly in the cause of Middle East peace. I am here to witness the fruition of their efforts as well.

Peacekeeping, balanced diplomacy in the region, and bilateral and multilateral assistance have been our trademarks in keeping the peace in the region, and they have worked. From this historic day, we must now shift our focus to efforts that will build and sustain the peace.

Our priority now is to support the new institutions and frameworks envisioned in this agreement on Palestinian autonomy. This will entail substantial and significant contributions within our means. Canada intends to be present.

Much needs to be done in the coming months, in the transition to autonomy, in the lead up to elections next year and in the longer term. Efforts must now focus on specific projects to make a difference in the lives of the people of Gaza and the West Bank, and to help create the infrastructure needed to empower the emerging Palestinian institutions.

Years of active Canadian presence in the Occupied Territories and two years of multilateral negotiations have taught us that we must assist the Palestinians to take their future into their own hands. As their new institutions emerge we need to discuss with them how best to do this in accordance with their own priorities.

To prepare for this, at my request, officials at CIDA [the Canadian International Development Agency] and External Affairs [External Affairs and International Trade Canada], along with

outside academics from all parts of Canada, have been brainstorming to identify the best means for Canada to provide tangible and timely assistance for the success of Palestinian autonomy. I expect specific and considered recommendations within the coming weeks.

Among the areas we have identified is assistance in the organization of next spring's elections. Canada has been approached on the subject in the past and I will be conveying our availability.

Similarly, Canada will be looking at a possible role in support of any international monitors to oversee the implementation of the agreement.

We shall also concentrate on enhancing Palestinian capabilities by providing the training required at various levels to set up effective, responsible public institutions. Here again, we would operate along the lines of the priorities indicated by the Palestinians themselves.

Canadians have respected institutions, private and public, federal, provincial and municipal, such as Statistics Canada, Elections Canada, the International Development Research Centre, the RCMP, and others which could provide invaluable assistance to emerging Palestinian institutions.

One practical way to ensure effective delivery of our assistance in co-operation with emerging Palestinian institutions may be to establish a local aid office, perhaps in Gaza. Subject to required consultations, we intend to proceed.

All of these efforts, combined with those of our international partners and NGOs [non-government organizations] will be needed to build a lasting peace in the Middle East. But let me caution that this truly historic achievement is only a beginning.

Many obstacles remain in achieving an overall and enduring peace for the Middle East. Canada will continue to work with all the parties to build on the opportunity created by this achievement, in order to obtain similar success in the other areas of the peace process.

In so doing, we must be sensitive to the concerns of Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, who have also to conclude with Israel the kind of agreement signed today.

As part of our continuing efforts to engage the parties in the multilateral peace talks, I might add that Canada is hosting in Sydney, Nova Scotia, a Confidence Building Seminar as part of the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group; it began yesterday and will end tomorrow.

I want to note that Canada will continue its active participation in the peace process, especially in the multilateral negotiations as gavel for the Working Group on Refugees, which will meet in Tunis from October 12 to 14.

Much of our future effort will remain concentrated in that group which, perhaps more than any other of the multilateral groups, deals with the human dimension of family separation among Palestinians and unemployment in the camps.

Critical to the significance of today's agreement is the hope it has generated among relatives and friends to be able to see one another again, and that economic activity from peace will create jobs.

What many thought was unimaginable has occurred today; and now the support needed to sustain the peace may seem equally daunting. We intend to help meet the challenge.