

**Remarks given by H.E. Mr. Paul Heinbecker
before the U.N. Security Council
Meeting on the situation in the Middle East
(18) December 2000**

Canada is deeply concerned by the cycle of violence in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Israel.

The violence directly undermines the human security of the people living there and of their communities.

Canada is deeply committed to the protection of all civilians.

At the same time, the U.N.'s lengthy experience in peacekeeping has taught us the importance of clear and achievable mandates.

We do not believe this draft mandate meets either test.

Canada would welcome any initiative, including the concept of an observation/monitoring force, that would help stabilize the situation in the region.

But we believe that an eventual deployment of such a force would be jeopardized if the Council pressed ahead without the acceptance of the parties directly concerned.

All Security Council statements and resolutions related to the protection of civilians have highlighted the primary responsibility of the parties concerned to protect civilian populations, as well as to ensure safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to populations in need.

For these reasons, Canada has decided to abstain on this resolution.

Canada believes that the Security Council should continue to support the Secretary General in his efforts, as mandated by this Council, to work with the parties to ensure the protection of all civilians and to return to the negotiating table.

Canada is heartened by the announcement that the parties will resume negotiations under the guidance of the USA.

Canada has long advocated that dialogue is the only option to reach a just and comprehensive settlement based on resolutions 242 and 338.

The Council should remain prepared to assist this process, if desired by both parties, including in terms of an observation or monitoring mission.