

**REMARKS GIVEN BY H.E. MR. PAUL HEINBECKER AMBASSADOR AND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS TO
THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE
EAST**

NEW YORK, 03 MAY 2002.

Mr. President,

I wish to thank you and the Council for the opportunity to express the views of the Government of Canada on this important issue.

Over the past few days, we have seen some encouraging developments in the Middle East.

We especially welcome the announcement in Washington yesterday by the "Quartet" of the intention to convene a peace conference this summer and look forward to considering how such a conference can best build on previous effort, including the near agreement at Taba.

Only such broad-based diplomacy will bring about the enduring political solution we all want and need.

The situation is urgent and no time should be lost in getting down to serious work.

We are also encouraged by the lifting of the siege of the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Ramallah.

Canada calls on Chairman Arafat to use his authority to prevent further violence; attacks against innocent civilians are never justifiable.

We call on both parties to ensure that the stand-off at the Church of the Nativity ends without further violence or destruction.

Regrettably, in the past week there have also been some very negative developments, as well.

Israel has not yet fully withdrawn from cities in the West Bank as called upon to do in Resolution 1402.

Under Article 25 of the United Nations Charter, UN members bind themselves to "accept the decisions of the Security Council".

Canada believes Israel must accordingly complete its withdrawal immediately.

Further, Canada viewed resolution 1405, in particular, as an important expression of the will of the international community.

With the prior concurrence of Israeli leaders, the Secretary General adopted the fact finding team concept and the Council gave its endorsement of the initiative unanimously.

The team that the Secretary General has assembled is distinguished and has wide-ranging experience.

We commend him for his efforts.

We also express our sincere gratitude to the members of the team for their willingness to participate at such short notice.

Canada has supported the fact finding team initiative because we believe it is vitally important that the facts surrounding the events in Jenin be brought to light.

We have registered our views direct with the Government of Israel.

It is in the interests of both parties, as well as of the entire international community, that a credible and transparent finding of the facts take place.

Canada believes that such an exercise must include an examination of all alleged wrongs, whether Israeli or Palestinian.

The Israelis' position has implications beyond the tragedy of the conflict in the Middle East.

The Security Council is at the heart of the international architecture for the preservation of international peace and security.

Some countries may feel that an effective UNSC is optional to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Canada is not one such country.

The Government of Canada therefore profoundly regrets the continuing Israeli position not to receive the fact finding team, which is compromising the authority of the Council.

As always, we stand ready to support this Council in bringing genuine and lasting peace to the region.

Thank you.