

**Remarks given by H.E. Mr. Paul Heinbecker
Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations
to the UN General Assembly on the occasion of the
UN Emergency Special Session on the Middle East
New York, October 20, 2000.**

Monsieur le Président,

Les Canadiens ont été profondément troublés par le conflit qui a englouti la Cisjordanie et la bande de Gaza et Israël.

Une violence insensée menace de balayer des années d'efforts pour établir un climat de confiance mutuelle et jeter les bases d'un accord pour le règlement final du conflit entre Israéliens et Palestiniens.

Les écrans de télévision sont pleins d'images d'une violence effroyable qui répugnent de toutes parts les personnes sensées du conflit.

The current situation in the Middle East is profoundly undermining the human security of the people there and of their communities.

When politics and discourse fail, people suffer.

Children above all.

Children who should be protected, not exploited or victimized, have particularly suffered through the current crisis -- the trauma of personal loss; the terror of violence; social dislocation; general insecurity.

We must not allow respect for international humanitarian and human rights law and principles, and tolerance between communities, to become casualties.

We believe that the best way to restore human security is to stop the downward vortex of action and reaction.

From the beginning of the crisis, Canada has pursued two fundamental objectives, both multilaterally through the United Nations and bilaterally with our partners in the Middle East.

Canada wants to see both the immediate cessation of violence and a return to

negotiations.

We support those efforts which we believe contribute to these objectives.

We welcome the commitments made at Sharm el-Sheikh and we call on the parties to respect them.

The success of these political efforts will hinge on the ability of all concerned to put the safety, security and well-being of people first, and in so doing help to restore stability and tolerance to this tormented region.

We are profoundly grateful for the efforts of UN Secretary General Annan who has played a critical role in helping contain violence and bring the parties together at a time when hope was at a low ebb and faltering.

We are equally grateful for the unflagging efforts of Presidents Clinton and Mubarak in the urgent quest for peace in the Middle East.

There is no alternative to negotiations if Palestinians and Israelis are to live in peace.

Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat demonstrated at the Sharm el Sheikh summit that they are capable of exerting the leadership necessary to break this cycle of violence; to begin the process of healing between peoples; to rebuild the trust that has been severely damaged.

They owe no less to their peoples and future generations.

It is time for them, and us all, to look forward.

All member states have a responsibility to help create a climate conducive to the achievement of peace.

We have informed the President of the General Assembly that we doubt that this “emergency” session will have a beneficial impact on the situation on the ground.

We are particularly mindful of the Secretary General’s wise caution that “... language can be violence too”.

Let us here be part of the solution, not of the problem.