

We cannot allow the situation to slip back to a state of no peace no war. We feel that the momentum for peace should not be squandered under any circumstances. Rather, it should be utilized fully, and with a sense of urgency commensurate with the still persisting danger of explosion. Any stalemate or stagnation will not only delay the settlement, but, in all probability, it would introduce certain qualitative and substantive changes that would obstruct the road to peace.

I trust that it has become quite evident that if we are really concerned with an overall settlement, we have to address ourselves to the core of the problem, namely, the Palestinian question. The Palestinian people have been deprived for over 27 years of having their own state where they can lead a productive and fulfilling life. Are they not entitled to their national rights like all other peoples? Would it not be a travesty of justice to deny them the inalienable right to live in peace and

dignity? Does it serve any useful purpose to perpetuate the state of strife and frustration? Fortunately, there are increasing signs that their cause is gaining more international support every day. Nations are coming to grips with the reality of the Palestine people as an indispensable factor in the equation of peace in the Middle East. Many Arabs are confident that the United States will not dissent from this irreversible trend. They feel, not without reason, that faithfulness to the essence of the American Revolution and the heritage bequeathed upon this nation by its founding fathers entail lending the Palestinians your understanding and support, thus, reinforcing the road to peace. We can all be assured that once the Palestinians have been accorded their basic right as a free people, they will become a force for peace, stability and human progress. Reason and reconciliation would prevail over animosity and hostility.

(From a speech at the banquet given in his honour  
by President Gerald Ford of the U.S.A  
Washington — October 27, 1975)