



Statements and Speeches

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THE UN ATTESTS THE COMMON ACCOUNTABILITY OF ITS MEMBERS

A Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, to the Twenty-third Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, September 26, 1978.

A year ago I was critical of some of the procedures of our Assembly. I still believe that we need to act and speak so that our people can understand what it is we are doing here, and can have confidence in our decisions. I do not mean to imply that we ought to agree on everything or even try to settle everything. On the contrary, I think we should be careful to arrange our agenda so that we concentrate on the major purposes of the UN, and not on the headlines of the moment.

I am glad to note that the Secretary-General has echoed some of these sentiments in his annual report. But he also emphasizes that the pursuit of global objectives ought to take precedence over "nationalistic aims". Let there be no doubt that Canada too regards the UN as a vital and essential world forum, which serves important global purposes.

There are two international issues that have defied solution for more than three decades but that now have reached a crucial turning-point. Peace in the Middle East is closer. An internationally-acceptable settlement in Namibia could still be within our grasp. But to make the most cherished hopes of millions come true will require wisdom, patience, fortitude and restraint in the weeks and months ahead.

Namibia

Eighteen months ago I joined my colleagues of the U.S.A., Britain, France and the Federal Republic of Germany in a concerted effort to bring about an internationally-acceptable settlement in Namibia. Since that day, a great deal of progress has been made. Painstaking negotiations, and the personal participation of foreign ministers at key junctures in the negotiating process, have demonstrated what can be achieved when political will and the determination to succeed are brought to bear upon seemingly intractable problems. After a year of detailed talks, and an intensive exploration of all the issues, the five Western members of the Security Council were able to draw up a compromise proposal, which I was privileged to introduce on April 25 to the Assembly's special session. At that same time, I was able to announce South Africa's acceptance of the plan. In July, SWAPO also accepted the Western plan, and we were thus able, with the full co-operation of the parties and the active support of the African "Front-line States", to take in the Security Council the first step towards the full implementation of our proposals. It was, therefore, with considerable optimism and satisfaction that we followed the progress of the special survey mission the Secretary-General dispatched to Namibia, under the leadership of his special representative, Mr Martti Ahtisaari.

When, on the basis of the findings of that mission, the Secretary-General published his
