



SSEA Barbara McDougall at a press conference during UNGA 46.

Mr. President, Canada is committed to improving the UN's ability to channel the military resources of Member States to peaceful purposes. This is essential for humanitarian purposes, as well as to promote peace and security through peacekeeping and through military enforcement when necessary. We look to increasing the capability of the Secretary-General to plan and conduct peacekeeping missions. We should also explore ways of turning these military resources to humanitarian relief purposes.

Regional security

We are all aware that the UN Security Council's ability to deter aggressive action cannot by itself provide global security. In addition, we need effective regional security arrangements on a cooperative basis, arrangements that can address some of the underlying causes of insecurity and instability.

The new global climate for cooperation has created opportunities for regions to address their own problems without being used as dominoes in some wider ideological game. It has also created obligations to do so. This approach is crucial for long-lasting peace and security in regions such as Central and Eastern Europe and the Asia-

Pacific. It has been essential for the progress towards peace in Cambodia and the solution of other regional conflicts.

In the Middle East problems remain, but we believe that solutions to these difficult problems are now a little closer. Canada will continue to support constructive initiatives such as the current efforts of the United States, based on the principles enshrined in Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. We call for direct negotiation between the parties concerned as the only route to a just and lasting peace. We continue to hope that a peace conference can open the door to those negotiations.

In the meantime, all countries can make particular efforts in the coming session to demonstrate their sensitivity to the parties directly concerned...

Arms proliferation: a Canadian initiative

Mr. President, renewed efforts to design a comprehensive and effective framework dealing with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are also absolutely essential. The Gulf conflict showed that conventional arms, as well as weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, can destabilize whole regions. Since 1950, the world has suffered 125 wars which have killed 25 million people, almost all as a result of conventional weapons. How many more conflicts, how many more deaths, how many more destitute refugees does the international community need before we apply the necessary political commitment to eliminating these threats?

Canada was among the first nations to call for definitive action. In February, our Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, characterized as insane the build-up of weapons that had taken place in Iraq. At that time, he launched an initiative that called for a number of concrete steps:

- universal adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its indefinite extension beyond 1995;
- immediate conclusion of a global, comprehensive and verifiable convention banning the acquisition, possession and use of chemical weapons;
- strengthening of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention; and

- transparency of international arms sales, particularly by the establishment of a UN register.

We are, with others, moving ahead with proposals to address the areas of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. With respect to conventional weapons, transparency is vital — not only for knowing what is happening in the arms trade, but also for building confidence and trust. A global arms transfer register that is universal, non-discriminatory and effective is long overdue. That register should include national inventories as well. And we must be prepared to act on the basis of that information.

We applaud the historic advances made over the past year in East-West arms control. We urge all parties to ratify and implement the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties as soon as possible, and then to begin anew to reduce unnecessarily large arsenals further.

We are not naive. Every country has a legitimate right to assess its own defence needs and act accordingly. But no country, under guise of defence, has the right to accumulate arms that are intended to destroy its neighbours. Equally troubling, of course, are excessive expenditures on arms which sacrifice other important priorities such as health, education and agriculture.

The choice is there for all of us to make: instruments of destruction or tools for peace...

Conclusion

Throughout our deliberations, we must remind ourselves that we are not here to represent blocs or to promote ideologies but to represent people: "We the peoples of the United Nations."

Never have these words meant more or held more promise. But words alone are not enough. They cannot turn famine into bounty, discrimination into equality, repression into freedom, or brutality into compassion. They will mean little if we fail to give ourselves the tools for effective action or if we succumb to the temptation of unilateralism.

Mr. President, Canada is determined not only to honour those words, but to ensure that this Organization has the means to put them into practice. ■