

Mr. President

I would like to offer you my congratulations and best wishes as you assume your important duties as President of this General Assembly of the United Nations. The wisdom and understanding you bring to this position is well-suited in these historic times. I am also confident you will do great honour to the legacy left by your distinguished predecessor and my good friend Dante Caputo.

Mr. President, before beginning my main remarks I want to comment on two particular developments of relevance to the United Nations.

The first concerns the application of modern technology to the challenge of peacekeeping. In April of this year, Canada completed a comprehensive study the purpose of which was to explore the utility of all forms of aerial surveillance to the peacekeeping tasks now before the international community. The conclusion of this study was that these overhead technologies - satellite of airborne - could significantly increase the efficiency of peacekeeping operations and related verification endeavours. This study will be submitted to the UN for its consideration.

I believe this is an important development both symbolically and as an achievement in its own right. It is the sort of pragmatic, concrete work necessary to allow the UN to handle its ever-expanding peacekeeping responsibilities more effectively. It also symbolizes one of the fundamental purposes of this Organization: harmonizing the wonders of modern technology to the tasks of peace-building and not war-making.

The second development on which I would like to comment is the readiness by Canada, if asked, to supplement the United Nations presence in Namibia by sending trained and respected police forces. Canada supported enthusiastically the idea that nations should help meet the urgent requirements for skilled policing in Namibia. We are ready to send members of our national force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who have played such a decisive and constructive role in our own history.

They were, in effect, Canada's first peacekeepers. In 1874, in one of the actions which made us a trans-continental nation, the North-West Mounted Police marched west, across 1,000 miles to establish by their presence, the rule of law in the Canadian west. They brought order, not force, and by their conduct, established a respect that endures to this day, and has made them one of the most admired police forces in the world. They would carry to Namibia, not only their skills, but their reputation as keepers of the peace.