

shall encourage agreement on a mutual and balanced reduction of conventional forces in Europe, and hence reduce the danger of escalation to nuclear war. We shall continue to press for a verifiable convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. Canada will continue its financial support of the world disarmament campaign. We shall, in addition, expect that the newly-created Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security will contribute its share of studies and advice on specific arms control proposals and measures to reduce international tension.

Mr. President, since we are new in office, I speak today in more general terms than on future occasions. The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, said that our new government "will play a more active role in the United Nations and its agencies".

Our government is committed strongly to the United Nations. We value our individual relations with other countries, and our role in associations of countries like the Commonwealth and La Francophonie. They are important, but not enough. Smaller and middle powers, in particular, need effective global institutions to make each of our voices heard in the world, and to help us to respond together to the enormous political and economic problems of our century. A dynamic United Nations system is essential for countries like Canada — and equally for the superpowers. Precisely because more communities are looking inward more often, we must strengthen global institutions which bring us together.

In his three consecutive annual reports, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuellar has tried to force us to face up to our responsibilities as member states. Most recently he asks: "Why has there been a retreat from internationalism and multilateralism at a time when actual developments both in relation to world peace and to the world economy would seem to demand their strengthening?"

When are we going to start to answer his uncomfortable questions? One hopes that it will not take a major disaster to jolt us out of our inertia.

The present moment, the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, is a fitting one for each member state to examine its commitment to the UN Charter. This anniversary must mark a renewal for the future, not just a celebration of the past.

A simple re-commitment to the Charter is not enough. Member states must actively work together to strengthen the UN system. The Secretary-General has expressed the hope that, in all our countries, our best thinkers will turn their talents to this task. Let us seize this challenge and give it focus.

An unprecedented conference of 35 leading Canadians, sponsored by the United Nations Association in Canada, will take place October 26 in Ottawa to launch a review of ways to strengthen the UN. Our prime minister and government believe that Canadian parliamentarians should also consider this question and present formal recommendations.

How can we translate the results of this soul-searching, in each of our countries, into collective action to strengthen the UN system in practical ways?

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