



Statements and Speeches

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PEACE AND DISARMAMENT FIRST PRIORITY IN CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Notes for a Speech by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Thirty-ninth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, New York, September 25, 1984.

...Eight days ago, the Progressive Conservative government of Canada assumed office. It is appropriate that the first major foreign policy statement outside Canada by our new government should be here at the United Nations. Like all countries, we have urgent problems at home, and we are determined to face them. But the basic reality of Canada is that we are open to the world. Our economy responds to the international economy. Our population comes from, and connects with, all continents and nations. The name of our capital city, Ottawa, is drawn from the Algonquin Indian word "a meeting place", and our history is that of a community where different cultures and contesting interests can meet together. Ever since we have been a sovereign nation, our governments and our people have tried to put our talents to work for the world. We shall continue in that spirit.

Canada was active at the creation of this United Nations, as successive Canadian governments, formed by different parties, have consistently helped this organization to meet its most difficult challenges. I come to this podium in the tradition of Howard Green of Canada, who struggled to achieve a partial test ban treaty, as a first step toward a comprehensive test ban; in the tradition of Lester Pearson, who inspired the concept of peacekeeping; and in the tradition of Paul Martin who helped to end the logjam which prevented the admission of new member states in the UN's early years. Canadians are proud of having contributed to the solution of problems such as these.

In the nearly four decades since the Second World War, the international community has come to count on Canada as a moderating influence in a world beset by extremes. Our new government is in the mainstream of this tradition, and intends to build on it, consistently and pragmatically.

We want to ensure that we are using our influence, and defining our interests, in ways which reflect the contemporary challenges facing Canada and the world. As a new government should, we shall undertake a thorough and public review of Canadian foreign policy, aimed at the creative renewal of a moderate and constructive Canadian role in the world. Citizens of Canada, and friends of Canada, will be encouraged to suggest how the Canadian international tradition can best be applied to the increasing tensions and interdependence of the modern world, including those of the nuclear age.

Mr. President, the frightening facts of the nuclear arms race are well known. The superpowers are developing new kinds of nuclear weapons; more countries are developing nuclear capacities; and the risk rises that terrorist groups could acquire nuclear devices. Physicians and scientists warn that, even for survivors, the world would be virtually uninhabitable after a major nuclear conflict.

But far more threatening than the weaponry are the patterns into which the world has settled. Nuclear arms control negotiations between the superpowers are at a standstill. This stalemate allows other
