

Last week in New York, I made a very strong statement before the United Nations General Assembly on a number of important issues that are close to the hearts of many Canadians -- most notably the protection of individual human rights, the development of democratic values and institutions, and the promotion of responsible public policy choices within individual nations, as well as a range of views on peacemaking, peacekeeping, non-proliferation and disarmament.

Every year the development of this speech takes on almost a life of its own as we try to distil down to 25 or 30 minutes the essence of Canadian foreign policy, now and for the future.

It is a task that I and my officials take up with some gusto, as both an intellectual and a physical challenge, but one, I am pleased to say, that once again has confirmed the importance of Canada's voice at the United Nations and its universal respect among the members of that organization.

This year I pulled no punches before the United Nations.

- Canada called for a strengthening of the United Nations and, particularly, for members to pay up past dues so that this premier global forum could operate to its full potential.
- Canada called for immediate consideration of the Secretary General's Report, "Agenda for Peace," specifically expansion of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking initiatives.
- As the inventors of "peacemaking," we called for a new examination of this concept -- which does not even appear in the UN Charter -- including the potential for more active forms of peacekeeping, based on our recent experiences in Sarajevo and other parts of the former Yugoslavia.
- We called for an urgent review of the financing of peacekeeping missions -- the recent decision to charge only participating countries for the new forces in the former Yugoslavia goes against the UN principle of collective responsibility.
- We called for the urgent review of certain longstanding peacekeeping arrangements, most notably in Cyprus, where the entrenchment of institutionalized peacekeepers threatens to become a norm, rather than a means to a peaceful end.
- Realistically, we called for the urgent consideration of the parameters for "peace enforcement" by the United Nations.