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Text of Statement to be made in the General Debate of the 21st Session of the General Assembly by the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs and Chairman of the Canadian Delegation, the Honourable Paul Martin, P.C., Q.C., M.P.

Mr. President, I have already had the opportunity of congratulating you on your election, and of welcoming Guyana as the most recent member of the Organization. It is with pleasure that I reiterate these sentiments today.

It is my intention on this occasion to discuss several areas of endeavour which in the opinion of the Delegation of Canada demand our particular attention if the United Nations is to develop as an influential force for peace in the world. I propose to say something about the Secretary-General and his office; the problems of attaining international peace and security, including peacekeeping, the war in Vietnam, and disarmament; economic and social progress; and the grave problems in Southern Africa.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I start, Mr. President, by paying tribute to the leadership and example of the Secretary-General. He has done much to inspire our joint endeavours over the past five years. He has said that no man is indispensable in the function which he himself has performed with such distinction. But notwithstanding the difficulties to which he has called attention, the guidance which he has provided; his sense of responsibility; his qualities of compassion and understanding; and, above all, his capacity to speak and act in the name of humanity are indispensable to the United Nations. I cannot see that they are easily separable from the person of the Secretary-General. His departure from these halls would be a heavy blow.

May I say, too, that I strongly endorse the determination of the Secretary-General to maintain and develop his office as a vital reality in the United Nations system. In this he is following the tradition established by Sir Eric Drummond in the days of the League of Nations, and by his own predecessors in the United Nations.