



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Text of a Speech by the Honourable Mitchell Sharp,
Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the
Twenty-third Session of the United Nations General
Assembly, October 9, 1968.

. . . My country . . . has made special efforts since 1945 to implement the principles of the Charter and to nurture the growth of this organization. Speaking in this Assembly for the first time as the representative of a new Canadian Government, I wish to re-affirm Canada's determination to do all it can to support these principles. It is our aim to help to achieve a better world by strengthening the United Nations and its agencies as indispensable instruments for international co-operation.

Canada's contribution will be pragmatic and realistic. It will be based on our assessment of what the situation requires the United Nations to do and what Canada can best do in the fulfilment of its responsibilities as a faithful member of the United Nations. In matters of peace and war there are limits on the kinds of agreement likely to be reached. Member states, however, must work towards strengthening the authority of the organization. Success will come slowly. Some would use this forum for the ends of propaganda alone. Others sincerely expect the Assembly to act as a quasi-government or legislature. Our yardstick ought to be the capacity of the United Nations to perform the functions which are its proper responsibility and on which there can be at any time a reasonable measure of agreement.

Canada's experience has led us to value our independence while recognizing the interdependence of all states in the modern world; to prize political diversity and cultural freedom; to cherish pride of country but to mistrust chauvinistic dogmas; to adapt but not to overthrow the traditions we have inherited from others; to govern by consent. We believe it is possible, indeed essential, to reconcile the affinities of geography and history and the close associations they imply with the universal conceptions set out in the Charter of equal rights, territorial integrity and political independence.

It follows that we cannot accept that a community of interest, real or alleged, political, cultural or economic, entitles one country to take upon itself the right to interfere in the internal affairs of another. In the Commonwealth of Nations to which we belong, the right of national self-determination is so taken for granted that member countries are free to develop ties with any other countries, including socialist countries.