



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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No. 53/37 Statement by the Chairman of the Canadian Delegation to the Eighth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. L.B. Pearson, made on September 23, 1953.

May I, in the first place, offer you, Madame President, my sincere congratulations and those of my delegation on your election as President of the Assembly, an honour well-deserved by the services that you and your country have given to the United Nations. As the President of the preceding Assembly, and for two long hours and 6 minutes the presiding officer of this one, I can assure you that my congratulations and good wishes are not coloured, even faintly, by envy!

The Eighth Assembly meets at a time when many think that the successful negotiation of some of the outstanding differences between the two major power groupings may be possible.

If there is any such happy possibility, it would be due, I think, not only to the armistice in Korea, or to changes on the other side of the Iron Curtain, but even more to the fact that in recent years a large part of the free, democratic world has learned to co-operate in purpose, policy and action for the defence of peace. Gradually, and not without difficulty, because we are speaking now of free and independent sovereign states, a unity and strength is developing, which is based on more than economic and military power. It is based also on a common belief in freedom and a determination to defend it against any reactionary and subversive forces which may threaten it.

Our co-operation is not synthetic; our unity is not imposed, nor is it of that monolithic type that Mr. Vyshinsky proudly ascribed yesterday to Soviet society. Honest differences, openly expressed, are bound to exist within and between free governments. Not only do we acknowledge them. At times we seem gratuitously to advertise them. But anyone who seeks to divide us, in the United Nations or elsewhere, by misinterpreting or exploiting these differences will soon find that the things that hold us together are far stronger and more enduring than those which, at times, seem to divide us.

If there are opportunities now for easing in some degree international tension, I hope that the eighth Assembly will use them to the full. We may not be able to change the facts of international life by resolutions in our Assembly. But by commission or omission, by what we say or do not say, we can lighten or darken the international atmosphere in which our problems must be solved.

The spirit of reason and conciliation which has for long animated the free peoples in approaching these problems was given eloquent and sincere expression in this Assembly