

to the United Nations peacekeeping forces is symbolic of that new awareness. Canadians took special pride in the award, since over 80,000 citizens of our country have served in United Nations peacekeeping contingents, 78 of whom have given their lives in the course of their peacekeeping duties. As Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, has recently observed, Canada's participation in every peacekeeping action thus far would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the Canadian people to the ideas and the aims of the United Nations Charter.

Canada's commitment to the principles and objectives of the organization, therefore, cannot be in doubt. Successive Canadian Governments, without exception, have advocated strengthening of the United Nations system and its effective use by its membership. We are very gratified indeed that others seem to be rediscovering the capability of the United Nations to play a significant and constructive role. I would like to note particularly the assistance the USSR provided to Canada in carrying out its peacekeeping tasks in Iran and Iraq, that represents one of several welcome new developments in the Soviet Union's approach to the United Nations.

It is precisely of the firmness of Canada's support for the United Nations system and our belief in its central role in building peace and enhancing security that we have always examined carefully and in a positive spirit any proposal for the strengthening of United Nations machinery or for improvements in its procedures and methods. We will continue to do so. However, that same concern for the viability of the United Nations has also prompted us to be cautious about proposals for major restructuring of existing machinery or for the elaboration of supplementary or parallel institutions.

In the Canadian view, the United Nations Charter remains valid in its totality and is not in need of rewriting. Neither do we see any need for a major overhaul of our institutional structures. We are similarly doubtful about the utility or even the wisdom of selecting from among the principles on which United

Nations institutions are now based with a view to bringing about major reorientations in our structures or procedures. What is needed is a sustained political will and determination to put to the best possible use the machinery that is already at our disposal. That applies, *a fortiori*, in the areas of peace, security and arms control.

It must be conceded that in the area of disarmament the recent record of the United Nations, and of the First Committee specifically, has been, at best, mixed. True, there have been some notable achievements. The elaboration by the United Nations Disarmament Commission of agreed sets of principles relating to confidence-building measures and to verification are solid examples. But, on the whole, our record has not been one about which we can boast. The Third Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament did not reach consensus on a concluding final document. Within the First Committee, recent years have witnessed a proliferation of resolutions and a general dispersal of effort.

It might be said that the situation is not one to be deplored but one that simply illustrates the function of this forum as a political seismograph giving voice to and reflecting accurately the diversity and contention that undeniably exist within the international community on the sensitive, difficult issues touching on peace, security and arms control and disarmament. That, of course, is a legitimate and necessary function of this forum. No participant here should ever feel inhibited from expressing governmental views and interests with directness and emphasis.

Nevertheless, it is not our sole function here to register national positions. If we are to have any real influence, if we are to contribute to the reconciliation of divergent views and the setting of priorities for concerted international effort, we must also seek out common ground. In practical terms, that means we must try to reduce the number of our draft resolutions. We must seek consensus on as many draft resolutions as possible. We must be discriminate and realistic about urging particular actions and undertakings of other forums. Only

in that way can we realistically expect to have some influence on deliberations and negotiations elsewhere, such as at the Conference on Disarmament.

I have outlined the broad perspective from which Canada is approaching our deliberations in this Committee this year. Now I would like to remark briefly on the particular subjects and issues to which Canada's delegation will be giving priority attention.

It is now virtually universally accepted that effective verification is an essential element of the arms control and disarmament process. This consensus has been concretely registered in the set of verification principles which were agreed upon in the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its past two sessions. Canada hopes and expects that the General Assembly will give its unqualified endorsement to those verification principles at the current session. The Canadian Government also firmly believes that the United Nations can have a significant and positive role in promoting and facilitating effective verification. We have, therefore, examined closely and in a positive spirit various proposals that have been made for a United Nations role in verification. We have consulted closely with the Governments which have put forward such proposals. Our central concern is to ensure that the United Nations can acquire an appropriate role in verification which will strengthen the arms control and disarmament process by facilitating the conclusion and implementation of agreements and will enhance the authority and credibility of the United Nations system. It is our carefully considered view that, pursuant to this objective, an expert study under the authority of the Secretary-General would be the wisest next step. In close cooperation with several other delegations, Canada will be sponsoring a resolution calling for such a study, as well as endorsing the verification principles agreed at the UNDC.

There is at this juncture a perhaps unprecedented global awareness of the abhorrent nature of chemical weapons. The main reason for this is not to be welcomed—the deplorable repeated use of chemical weapons in the Gulf war, as