

The history of the world in this century has been characterized by attempts to arrive at forms of international organization which will ensure lasting peace and security for all countries and peoples, while at the same time permitting the greatest possible degree of national freedom and independence. We have finally arrived at a point where resort to war in this modern age can have catastrophic consequences.

With modern sophisticated weapons available to many states, local conflicts can rapidly escalate into major wars with repercussions far beyond the original scene of conflict. Behind such conflicts lurks the awesome threat of confrontation between the great powers, with their devastating nuclear arsenals, and the spectre of nuclear warfare, which cannot lead to victory but only to relative degrees of defeat. Fortunately, this is a fact of life which most responsible powers have recognized, although they have not yet been able to translate their awareness into terms of comprehensive arms control.

In the circumstances in which we find ourselves, we should be thankful that the United States, the most powerful country the world has ever known, has been so willing to recognize the need for effective international organization, through the United Nations and other bodies. Much that has been accomplished could not have been achieved if it had not been for the "decent respect for the opinions of mankind" which is referred to in the Declaration of Independence and continues to inspire American policy-makers.

Canada, like the United States, is deeply concerned with the preservation of its national identity and independence. Not possessing the enormous strength of the United States, Canada has perhaps felt even more compelled to seek guarantees for peace and security through international organization. In contributing to the development of effective international machinery, we have served our own interests, as well as those of the world community of which we are a part.

Canada's pursuit of this policy goes on at many levels, and in many ways. At the immediate practical level, it is manifested by the presence of Canadian personnel in peace-keeping forces and truce-supervisory groups around the world: in the Middle East, in Cyprus, in Kashmir, in Indochina. In the wider context, it can be seen in Canada's unremitting efforts to encourage progress towards arms control and ultimately, we hope, towards effective disarmament, and in the creation of more effective procedures for international peace-keeping operations.

Complete success has often proved extremely elusive. We have learned that quiet, patient work, often in difficult circumstances, is required, and will continue to be needed for many years to come.

Nowhere is the effort more urgent than in the continent of Asia. Canada, no less than the United States, recognizes that what is happening in Asia today is of great importance for the shaping of an orderly and peaceful world.