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THE CRISIS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The following is a speech to the Vancouver Institute by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Paul Martin, on February 20:

It would be easy, for anyone contemplating the course of events from day to day, to look upon the world in which we live as one in which crisis succeeds crisis. I have myself tried to resist this tendency for two reasons. First, because it is important to distinguish crisis from change. It is inevitable, I think, that a period in which a very large number of new nations have been emerging, in which traditional societies are being compelled to make the transition to modern status and modern structure, in which science and technology are being mobilized on a vast scale in support of man's efforts to control his environment and make it more amenable – that such a period should be one of change. I believe it would be wrong for us to be daunted by the prospect of change or to be drawn to conclude that all change is necessarily critical.

EVOLUTION IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

My second reason for hesitating to apply the term "crisis" indiscriminately to the trends and developments to which Canadian foreign policy must be responsive is because I am confident, in my own mind, that the direction in which matters have been evolving over the past two decades has, on the whole, been right and beneficial. I say this because, over that period, we have come, over an increasingly wide area, to organize our affairs in common. We have come to recognize and accept the implications of our interdependence. And we have created the

institutions that enable us to give substance and meaning to the notion of a world community. Among these the United Nations occupies, of course, a vital place.

I put these reflections before you today because they provide the setting for what I should like to say about the really critical situation which I think we have now reached in the affairs of the United Nations. In using the term "critical" in this context, I do so advisedly and in the sense of Mr. Adlai Stevenson's memorable speech to the General Assembly last month in which he said:

We have reached a fork in the road ahead of this organization – and thus in our search for world order and our journey toward a wider community.

Much has been said and written about the crisis which confronts the United Nations at this moment – so much, in fact, that there has been difficulty in retaining the elements of that crisis in proper perspective. Perhaps, therefore, it would be useful if I were to try to disentangle the situation as I see it.

CRISIS OF SOLVENCY

In the immediate foreground, there is what I might call the crisis of solvency of the United Nations. This can be summarized briefly as follows: An amount of some \$140 million is now owing to the United Nations in accumulated arrears. The net cash resources of the organization have dwindled to less than \$15 million, its Working Capital Fund is all but depleted, and it has debts amounting to \$45 million in addition to outstanding bonds in the value of some \$150 million which were issued to finance

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