



# Statements and Speeches

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## PRINCIPLES OF UN CHARTER SIGNPOSTS TO PEACE

Statement by the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister, to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, October 23, 1985.

Mr. President, I would like to speak with you today about people and nations working together.

History shows that the solitary pursuit of self-interest outside the framework of broader international co-operation is never enough to increase our freedom, safeguard our security, or improve our standard of living.

Since 1945, we have not had a world war. But we have lived for decades under the threat of an ultimate catastrophe, one which would unleash immeasurable forces of destruction. The same human genius which conquered outer space has also wrenched from nature the secret of devastation.

In our search to create, we discovered the ability to annihilate. Anxiety has become a fact of daily life. It can be seen in the arts; it permeates political activity; it alters social structures; it shapes mentalities.

How can we help but fear our adversaries, when they too are equipped with an inventive and lively intelligence, when they too have mastered the destructive power of the atom, and above all, when they are filled with the same fear that so preoccupies us — a fear exacerbated by the fact that the strong must also be wary of the anger of the weak. We have even gone so far as to institutionalize fear, to the point that peace itself is based on a balance of terror.

Can we blame the UN for having been unable to put an end to the vicious cycle of force and fear, of injustice and violence? In my view we cannot blame the UN for problems that have been caused essentially by self-centred nationalism and our own failures. We must not make the UN a scapegoat for our inability to recognize and accept diversity in the world. We must not blame the UN for weaknesses that result from its being a mere human creation.

While the UN may seem powerless in the face of the circumstances that confront it, it is nevertheless all we have. The men and women who created this organization in 1945 hungered for peace and justice and were guided by high principle. They sought to create a global forum where they could voice their hopes and fears, their dreams and regrets.

In this organization, nations have the opportunity to bring reason to their relations, to break the chain of violence, to defuse the lust for revenge, to voice their needs, and to affirm their dignity. And, in the end, to realize the extent to which they share membership in the same species.

In the end, we must always return to consideration of humanism. Humanism generates and shapes

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international consciousness, cultural development, economic development, and the respect for those values that form the basis of our perception of the world.

The UN was created by man, and is therefore fragile. For this reason, I do not believe that it is completely appropriate to talk about celebrating one particular anniversary of the UN; rather, we must celebrate its existence every day, for it is threatened every day, and it must be protected every day.

Since 1945, we have all recognized the threat presented by catastrophic weapons of war. That threat goes beyond our individual concerns as peoples and nations. It commands the attention of all; it calls for urgent action by the entire international community.

Mr. President, 40 years ago, the Charter called on the world "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Today, we struggle to save life from nuclear apocalypse. We have some cause for hope. In their meeting next month in Geneva, President Reagan and Secretary-General Gorbachev may set us on the road to a significant reduction in the arsenals of both sides. To diminish the spectre of annihilation, the superpowers must reach for an agreement — but the responsibility is not theirs alone.

All of us, through international forums and treaties, have a role to play in arms reduction. We must reinforce negotiations for verifiable disarmament accords on testing and weaponry, both conventional and nuclear. Individually and collectively, we must all do our part. Progress is possible. The recent successful review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty gives credence to that.

Canadians recognize that there is no greater goal, no more compelling duty than the quest for peace. We shall not rest until our security can be assured without tens of thousands of nuclear weapons. Above all, we shall not rest until we have secured the future for our children.

Mr. President, 40 years ago, the peoples of the world were united in the hope that human rights could become subject to universal standards. Forty years later, some countries apply these standards only in part, and a few — sadly — hardly at all. In this respect, South Africa stands alone.

Only one country has established colour as the hallmark of systematic inequality and repression. Only South Africa determines the fundamental human rights of individuals and groups within its society by this heinous method of classification. This institutionalized contempt for justice and dignity desecrates international standards of morality and arouses universal revulsion. That is why, at our meeting in Nassau just concluded, Commonwealth leaders agreed on a course of common action against South Africa.

And the crescendo of pressure is having an impact. Already, the opposition of the business community to *apartheid* is unprecedented. The combination of internal dissent and external condemnation is obviously taking its toll on the government. The Mandelas, the Tutus, the Boesaks will one day prevail.

It is our hope — and it must surely be the hope of all — that bloodshed and violence will cease in the transition to a free and democratic society. It is our hope — as it must surely be the hope of all — that the Republic of South Africa will come to its senses before it is completely engulfed by the shockwaves of violence.

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My government has said to Canadians that if there are not fundamental changes in South Africa, we are prepared to invoke total sanctions against that country and its repressive regime. If there is no progress in the dismantling of *apartheid*, our relations with South Africa may have to be severed absolutely. Our purpose is not to punish or penalize, but to hasten peaceful change. We do not aim at conflict but at reconciliation — within South Africa and between South Africa and its neighbours.

The way of dialogue starts with the repudiation of *apartheid*. It ends with the full and equal participation of all South Africans in the governing of their country. It leads toward peace. If it is not accepted, the course of sanctions will surely be further pursued. Canada is ready, if there are no fundamental changes in South Africa, to invoke total sanctions against that country and its repressive regime. More than that, if there is no progress in the dismantling of *apartheid*, relations with South Africa may have to be severed absolutely.

Forty years ago, emerging from the ruins of global conflict, the world was in economic upheaval. Today, though we have made enormous gains, hundreds of millions are caught in desperate economic circumstances. Over the past several weeks, from this dais, heads of state, heads of government and foreign ministers have eloquently described their circumstances, ranging from crippling burdens of debt and blighted prospects on the one hand, to the menace of protectionism on the other.

Canada is pressing, urgently, for a new round of multilateral trade negotiations. We are seeking to liberalize further our own trading relationships with our largest partner, the United States of America. We are working actively to strengthen the capacity of international financial institutions to ease the paralysing burden of Third World debt and permit resumed growth. We are increasing our aid.

The international mobilization and delivery of aid show dramatically what immense good can be done when governments and citizens together, recognize crises and act with concerted determination aided by organizations such as the UN and its agencies. If, collectively, we have managed to save whole populations from starvation — and we have — then surely in the same spirit we can improve our performance in easing the international economic predicament.

Forty years ago, there was another blight upon this earth that took an incalculable toll of human life: remorseless epidemics of diseases. Over the intervening decades, we have made huge strides in discovering cures and in combating those diseases. Today we stand on the threshold of another dramatic breakthrough.

UNICEF [The United Nations Children's Fund] and the World Health Organization have set 1990 as the target for world-wide, universal immunization. If the target is reached, the lives of as many as five million infants and children will be saved every year. We have eradicated smallpox; through universal immunization, we must now do the same with diphtheria, measles, polio, tetanus and whooping cough.

Universal immunization is an astonishingly efficient health investment. On the eve of the Commonwealth Conference last week in Nassau, I confirmed Canada's commitment to this goal and announced a significant increase to Canada's international health care efforts. Canada will continue to collaborate

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with UNICEF and the World Health Organization as they co-ordinate this inspiring campaign. For us, the goal of mass immunization exemplifies, in large measure, what the United Nations is all about.

Finally, Mr. President, recent events compel me to address the scourge of international terrorism. By and large, Canada has been spared the ravages of terrorism. Today, this is no longer the case — we too have experienced its pain. No one nation alone can combat terrorism; it demands concerted international action. We must exchange information, there must be nation-to-nation understanding, and we must have international conventions. Those who murder and maim innocent people, those who bring anarchy to civilized society can have no sanctuary, no comfort, no indulgence.

Canada joins with countries around the world in the search for a determined and effective response. We urge all states to support such practical measures as counter-terrorist conventions and the International Civil Aviation Organization's drive to strengthen the security of international air travel.

Canada esteems the United Nations, its record and its potential. Our commitment to the principles of the Charter and to international co-operation is no fashionable pose. For four decades, it has been a motive force of our foreign policy. Time and again, on critical occasions Canada has offered its troops for UN-sponsored peacekeeping roles around the globe.

Canadians are united in one simple conviction: to better the human condition and to achieve international peace and security. Nations acting together can always do much more than nations acting apart.

To be sure, we recognize the imperfections, deficiencies and limitations of the United Nations. That is why we work so hard to improve its functioning; that is why we so strongly support the Secretary-General as he strives to reform it from within. But after all is said and done, Mr. President, we must surely agree with the Secretary-General that where the United Nations is weak it is almost always due to a failure of political will. That kind of failure is not easily reformed. It will change only when sovereign states realize that the principles of the Charter are the signposts that can lead us all towards mutual respect, collective security and lasting peace. Living by these principles offers the best hope for us all. To the fulfillment of these noble and timeless principles, Canada today renews its pledge of loyalty and support.

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