



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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PAST AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

A Year-End Message by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Howard Green, December 29, 1961.

The beginning of a new year is a time for reflection about the events of the preceding 12 months and about the prospects for the future.

1961 produced its share of setbacks - disappointments and periods of dangerous tension. In Berlin, in the Congo, in Southeast Asia there were developments which at times threatened the world with armed conflict. The Soviet Union's resumption of nuclear tests on a massive scale intensified the fear that nuclear war might occur in spite of the general realization of its awful consequences. The United Nations, to which people look more and more for a solution to international problems, was itself beset by an internal crisis which made many fear for its future - especially when tragedy removed its devoted servant Dag Hammarskjold.

Yet responsible leaders would be doing a disservice to mankind if they were to dwell exclusively on the difficulties which characterized 1961 - without acknowledging the advance and solid achievements of that year. Indeed we should not lose sight of the all-important fact that major conflict was avoided and that as the year closed, the processes of negotiation and conciliation were at work - or in prospect in most of the world's trouble spots.

Two Areas of Crisis

In Berlin for example, the deadline imposed by the Soviet Union was lifted, a development which brought with it a resumption of diplomatic contacts and improved prospect of a negotiated settlement where a few months earlier the worst crisis of the year had arisen.

In Southeast Asia and in particular in Laos a dangerous trend of events at the beginning of the year had been checked and the ground-work for a negotiated settlement laid. This was done through the convening in Geneva in May of a 14-nation

conference to search for a formula for the independence and permanent neutrality of that unhappy state. A substantial measure of progress has rewarded the patient efforts of the negotiators and, despite continuing difficulties, there is still hope that an agreement will be signed early in the new year. Success could mean not only peace in Laos - but a promising formula for dealing with other areas which are a source of friction between East and West.

In the Congo, the United Nations force has continued to demonstrate its ability to respond to the varied demands made upon it during the year. Mind you, this was a new experiment in the peace-keeping function of the United Nations and naturally serious difficulties have been encountered - but the general course and direction of the United Nations' role cannot be questioned. Were it not for the United Nations' presence, the Congo would probably sink into tribal strife and might even become the scene of a great-power conflict. Canada continues to participate in the United Nations Congo force and to support the aims of the world organization, confident that there is no real alternative to United Nations assistance if peace is to return to that part of Africa.

Increased UN Stature

The United Nations itself - the only body which truly reflects the state of international relations - has gained in stature during the year. The internal crisis created by the death of Dag Hammarskjold and which for a time threatened its very existence, was overcome in a satisfactory way through the assumption of the office of Secretary-General by U Thant of Burma. The administration of his office in the weeks that have passed since his election gives promise that he will continue the traditions of selfless leadership and wise judgment which have come to be associated with the office of Secretary-General. The fact that the crisis was weathered without sacrifice of Charter principle or derogation from the integrity of the office of the Secretary-General is a source of both satisfaction and potential future strength for the United Nations.

Progress toward Disarmament

In the field of disarmament, considerable progress was made during 1961. From the time when 10-nation disarmament committee negotiations were broken off in June 1960, the Canadian Government has pressed to have the talks restarted. Intensive discussions behind the scenes at the sixteenth General Assembly of the United Nations finally led to agreement on a statement of principles to guide future disarmament negotiations and on a satisfactory negotiating forum. The enlarged and more representative composition of the disarmament committee, to which eight uncommitted nations have been added, should bring new ideas on the problem and should give greater assurance that the talks when resumed will be continued without interruption until a workable scheme for actual measures of disarmament is devised.

The need for real progress towards disarmament has never been more graphically illustrated than by the explosion by the Soviet Union of a monster bomb this year. Mankind will never live easily or free from fear so long as this menace exists - and the overwhelming majority of nations clearly and courageously expressed their condemnation of the Soviet Union's disregard for human welfare in the vote of the United Nations calling on the Soviet Union to refrain from exploding the super bomb. That appeal went unheeded but it was a demonstration of the effectiveness of the United Nations as a forum for the mobilization of world opinion.

Aid for Developing Nations

In recalling the accomplishments of the past year, we may also take encouragement from the continuance and expansion of efforts to assist the growth of the developing countries. While an immense amount remains to be done, it bodes well for the future that the more industrialized countries continue to recognize an obligation to assist the less developed nations to improve their standards of living. Canada for her part is putting more than \$60 million into programmes in Africa and Asia - and has joined the Economic Commission for Latin America - as an earnest of her deep interest in the welfare of the countries of those regions.

War on Want

There is one project in this field in which Canada takes particular pride. I refer to the World Food Programme which was recently endorsed by an overwhelming majority at the United Nations. While the exact nature of this programme remains to be settled by the 20-nation committee recently set up by the United Nations, the initial objective is the elimination of famine and malnutrition in areas of chronic food shortage. Canada will participate in the initial 3-year programme and will contribute about \$5 million in cash and foodstuffs to the proposed \$100-million programme. We are confident that this enlightened humanitarian project will enlist the widespread international support essential to its ultimate success.

New problems and difficulties in international affairs certainly lie ahead, but we must not approach them in a spirit of pessimism and distrust. The future stands open to our initiative. I know that we can do a good deal, not only at the national level, but at the level of each single individual. Were I to dedicate this year-end message to anyone, I would dedicate it to the ordinary people of the world whose individual pleas are seldom heard, but whose collective efforts will in the end direct the tide of history into channels where peace, freedom and human brotherhood can flourish.