

## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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No. 52/39 Statement by the A/Chairman of the Canadian Delegation to the Seventh Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, Mr. Paul Martin, made in the opening debate on October 17, 1952.

I am proud, as the Acting Head of the Canadian Delegation, to find myself addressing a fellow Canadian as President of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The support which you received for this high office is, if I may say so, a tribute both to Canada and to you personally. It is a recognition of your - and our - devotion to the cause of peace for which the United Nations Organization was created and remains dedicated.

And now, ... for the first time since our countries pledged themselves to the ideals for which the United Nations stands, we have a permanent home. I think it is fitting that, as others have before me, we should pay our respects and offer our best thanks to those whose skills and talents have made possible the completion of these magnificent buildings. Although, as the Secretary-General has said in the introduction to his report, "the situation today had not changed in any fundamental way for the better", I do believe that this session of the General Assembly could be a turning point in our affairs - a turning point on the road towards establishing the United Nations and all it stands for on a solid and enduring a footing as the rock on which these permanent buildings now stand.

I think, however, that our distinguished past President, Dr. Padilla Nervo, did well to remind us in his fine address on Tuesday, that our situation could easily turn, not for the better but for the worse. The United Nations cannot indefinitely survive an annual increase of international tension, nor an annual repetition if I may say so, of propaganda debates. I may say to the distinguished delegate from Poland that I do not propose to follow his talk - what the world wants is not another peace pact but that we should live up to the obligations that have already solemnly been arrived at. I thought Dr. Nervo was right to insist on the primary role of the United Nations being one of conciliation and to apply that principle to Korea.

It is perfectly obvious that the United Nations is not in any sense a world government. The only basis on which we can operate is the basis of consent. We cannot dictate an armistice in Korea or impose upon the world a system of general disarmament. Such great ends can only be attained by free agreement based on a mutual desire for peace and stability.

These are the goals we all seek, and yet there is no agreement. Our task is not made easier when one group of nations directs a deliberate and sustained campaign of hate against another group, or when all efforts at compromise and conciliation are met by a stream of abuse directed particularly against the United States and incidentally against all who are friends of that great democracy. We had an example of that a few moments ago.

Well, we are friends of the United States. We are friends in spite of the fact that we are also neighbours. Canada and the United States have lived side by side for nearly two centuries. We have had our difficulties as neighbours do, but we know from a hundred years of experience that this great and this smaller nation can live together without fear and in mutual respect. We are proud of our friendship and proud of our example. Our only wish is that the United Nations could see established the same confident and friendly relationship between all nations. If such a basis of mutual trust and respect could be made universal, this body would be truly the United Nations.

By all odds, the most important, most explosive, and probably the most difficult question we face is Korea.

As we shall, before long, be discussing Korea in Committee, I think that the Assembly would do well to follow the example so wisely given us by Mr. Acheson yesterday. I shall therefore confine my remarks on this aspect of our problems to one or two general observations at this time.

Last year the Assembly voted to defer consideration of the Korean items on its agenda until a military armistice had been achieved or until other developments made further consideration of the problem desirable. The good sense of that proposal was realized by the overwhelming majority who saw that a solution would not be facilitated by an angry exchange of charge and counter-charge. Now that four of the five points of disagreement outstanding have been resolved, and only one issue divides the negotiators at Panmunjom, I profoundly hope that we at this Assembly will not complicate the task of the United Nations negotiators. Theirs is a thankless task, and yet one for which we should render thanks to those members of the Unified Command whose patience has been so sorely tried in these past months and in which they have ably represented the United Nations.

My delegation will take it as a fundamental premise that present hostilities must be limited to the Korean peninsula and that the search for an orderly settlement of those hostilities by negotiation at Panmunjom must be continued. The United Nations intervened in Korea for the sole purpose of resisting and defeating aggression. That was - and is - its sole purpose. We would regard that purpose as having been achieved through an honourable truce negotiated on the basis of the present battle lines and if I may say so again, addressing my remarks to the last speaker. Whose territory, whose security is threatened by this proposition? Why, then, can we not agree?

One issue alone is holding up a truce. Surely it should not be beyond the resources of human intelligence and patience on both sides to find, consistent with principle, a way to resolve this sole remaining sticking point if there is a real desire on both sides to come to an agreement. The most recent proposals of the Unified Command should have gone a long way towards convincing all who bring an impartial mind to the examination of the question that the desire for agreement is deep and genuine on our side.

From whatever point of view we approach this problem of achieving an armistice in Korea, we must never allow ourselves to accept the continuation of the fighting for one day longer than necessary to achieve the principles for which the United Nations went into Korea.

I suppose we have always been aware in the United Nations that underneath the so-called East-West issues which have for the most part pre-occupied our political discussions in the General Assembly during the past six years, there lay other difficulties of a long-range character which at some time or another were bound to emerge here and which would continue to exist even if by some magic the East-West issues were to evaporate overnight. Some of these underlying issues are this year beginning to come to the surface as major problems before the Assembly. It is our duty to give a fair hearing to every complaint and to every appeal that we have bound ourselves by the Charter to consider and discuss.

Since the Second World War, it is a fact that one-quarter of the world's population has achieved, by various roads, independence and direct control over their own destinies. This great surge towards self-determination is an historical trend. It is the goal not only of the aspirations of the peoples who for many years have been dependent economically and politically upon other Powers, but it is in large measure true to say that the same goals are now recognized also, for the first time in history, by all civilized free states, those who control dependent territories as well as those who do not. The point at issue, therefore, has become increasingly one of means rather than ends, of timing rather than ultimate objectives.

Speaking for a country which grew up from colonial to independent status before the United Nations came into existence, I cannot guess how our development would have fared had those of our forefathers who pursued the family struggle for independence had such an organization as this to which they might have appealed. I think it would be very difficult to say whether, looking back on our history, any kind of international organization could, in fact, have speeded up the process. And I think it is even more difficult to say whether a speeding up would, from our purely national point of view, have been to our long-term advantage.

Yesterday the distinguished delegate the Foreign Minister for Iraq, paid a generous tribute to the far-sighted leadership of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands under whose auspices freedom has come to India and Pakistan, to Ceylon and Indonesia. He also acknowledged with a gratitude we all share our debt to France which has for so long stood as a living symbol of the principles of liberty. My country has confidence that the notable record of progress, of which these nations are so justly proud will continue unabated, and that their proclaimed goal will be realized to the benefit of the peoples concerned. To achieve this, two things are necessary: orderly progress not jeopardized through the reckless and destructive action of extremists, and a constant awareness by the administering powers of the need for the maximum rate of progress in the countries under their authority. Moderation on the one side, and good faith on the other are the twin methods by which the progress of dependent peoples toward freedom will be steady and sure. In the same temper of moderation and good faith, our debates here should not certainly at this time, degenerate into an exchange of accusations and recriminations, but should seek to bring the collective good sense of this body to bear on these problems in a way that will help instead of hinder our advance toward the goal in which all civilized states believe.

If the General Assembly is misused as if it were a government or a court, the result will, I fear, be that delegations who think as we do will be less inclined than they are at present to see whether Assembly discussions of, for example, the colonial

issues of which we have been speaking, can be channelled into moderate and constructive lines. For if politics is "the art of the possible", we can see no good coming from demands which are patently impossible, no matter how many votes they may gain. We live in a troubled world, and we must all take that fact into account in what we ask and when we ask it.

Much will undoubtedly be said in our debates about justice. I should like to conclude this section of my remarks with a quotation from that great book of Islamic knowledge, the Mathnawi. I cannot pretend to my Muslim friends that I am conversant with the Mathnawi but I was very much taken by what it says about justice. It says that to give water to a tree is just, but to give water to a thorn is not. At this Assembly, we might also consider the appropriateness and the usefulness, for the purposes and principles of the United Nations, of giving our time and our place to discussions that can never bear fruit but only thorns.

By no means all of our problems in this general field will be political. We shall also be discussing very practical and pressing economic problems - how to feed the mounting populations of Asia, how to pick the fruits of the earth from land at present bearing only thorns. With the dissolution of most of the old political relationships by the sometimes overhasty action of that powerful solvent, nationalism, new ways of meeting the perennial problems of economic development must be found. The United Nations has an important place, I believe, in working out and applying experimental solutions for these new relationships between countries which happen to be more developed - not so much in natural resources as in "know-how", - and those which are in need of development and as yet lack the resources both of capital and skill to develop themselves unaided at the pace demanded by their peoples.

And so in this effort to aid in raising the standards of undeveloped nations, my country has played and will continue to play its part. We sympathize most earnestly with the picture that has been painted by several speakers of the poverty and the distress that afflict so much of the world. We have made our contribution to the generous and promising schemes of assistance that have already been inaugurated. We are interested above all in the programs of technical assistance with which we are already associated. We are profoundly aware that much of the poverty in other regions springs not from a lack of resources, but from a lack of the technical knowledge and ability that would enable the peoples of those countries to develop their own resources for their own benefit. We believe that it is through the sharing of the technical knowledge which has brought such striking advances to the western world that other regions of the earth can themselves develop along the same path and toward the same goal. We recognize that where local resources are inadequate, a measure of financial assistance may still be necessary while this process is being brought into play. But in the interests of the under-developed countries themselves, and particularly of their independence, economic as well as political, we believe that the most effective form of help is the self-help which an advance in technical knowledge will bring about.

The under-developed countries need what the late President Roosevelt used to refer to, when speaking of another emergency, as "priming the pump". As the Prime Minister of Canada recently said when speaking of the Colombo Plan, we hope "not only to raise the living standards of the people benefiting from it but that it will also build up enough confidence in their countries to prime such a flow of foreign and domestic investments that prosperity will come to the entire southern part of Asia".

We think not only of Asia but of all countries whose peoples desperately need help, impartially and unconditionally given.

One group of nations, Mr. President, one group of members of the United Nations who consider themselves developed do nothing at all about these problems except exploit them for propaganda. They are not even willing to belong to the various specialized agencies. We who do want to tackle the needs of the under-developed areas want you who speak for those peoples at this Assembly to understand our present difficulties. It is not because we are unwilling to lay upon ourselves as heavy burdens of taxation as others, but because of the large part of my Government's budget which has to be spent for the unprofitable, unproductive but wholly necessary purpose of providing our people at this time in the history of the world with a minimum of security - a minimum insurance premium that we consider it prudent to devote to the up-keep to our freedom and to the prevention of a third World War.

To quote my Prime Minister again, we hope and believe "that once the measures for our own safety and the safety of all freedom loving peoples with which our own is bound up, have been reasonably secured from the formidable threat that still shows no signs of diminishing, Canadians will want to participate to a greater degree than they can today in helping their less fortunate fellow human beings to improve their lot in life", and yet we are convinced that the measure of the contribution that we are making at this time is not without significance.

I have linked the extension of our programmes of economic development and technical assistance with the question of disarmament and collective security. In the simplest terms, most of the water must come out of the same well for one or for the other, and we are inevitably faced with the problem of priorities. The balance is not easy to find but we must, according to our lights, do our best to keep it. And I am not ashamed of the contribution that my country is making.

In this opening statement I have tried to develop a certain concept of the United Nations and to use it as a guide to the policy which my delegation will follow in threading our way through all the subtle and often conflicting legal interpretations to which the Charter of the United Nations is likely to be subjected. Perhaps we might make more use of the advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice to guide us. There is, however, one issue on which I hope and believe there will be very general agreement, though this may not be enough for a solution. That is the question of the admission of new members.

I have no doubt whatever that the United Nations was intended by the great majority and probably all the founding fathers at San Francisco to be, in due course, a universal organization. True there were restrictive provisions concerning ex-enemy states but these were not intended to debar them forever. This is not the place for a detailed argument as to the reasons but let me simply state my belief that neither the veto nor Article 4 were ever intended to keep out of the organization any independent state worthy of the name. I am not speaking in favour of a "deal", but, as the Secretary-General has expressed it in the introduction to his Annual Report, of "real universality". As he has said, surely, despite the deadlock on other issues, we should be able to make some progress on this issue at this Assembly, although the Assembly alone cannot resolve the deadlock among the Great Powers.

So, all I have said may be summed up in one phrase, one definition. I left my "text", so to speak, to the end, because I think it can usefully be applied to almost everything that I have said. It is a definition of a nation taken from St. Augustine's The City of God: "A nation is an association of reasonable beings united in a peaceful sharing of the things they cherish". It is hard for us individually or collectively to live up to it, but if we come here prepared to act as reasonable human beings and to try in some measure to be united, as many of us as possible, whether we sit in the front row or in the back row, in a peaceful sharing of the things we cherish, we shall have served our countries well at this critical time in the history of the world.

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