CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(FIFTEENTH SESSION)

TEXT OF ADDRESS: EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1960.

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

PRESS RELEASE NO. 2

750 - 3rd Avenue
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ADDRESS BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN G. DIEFENBAKER, Q.C., M.P., PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK CITY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1960

Mr. President and Distinguished Delegates:

Mr. President, I congratulate you on your election. I know that the General Assembly will benefit greatly from your wisdom, experience and independent judgment, qualities which are so essential to the successful discharge of your high office.

I join in welcoming the newly elected member states. I know that they will derive advantage and strength from membership in the United Nations as the Organization will benefit from their participation in its work for peace.

It is particularly significant that thirteen of these new member states are in Africa -- that continent in which such great changes are taking place and which today holds the centre of the world stage. Older members of the United Nations have a responsibility to assist these new member states in solving the challenging problems facing their leaders and peoples.

This substantial accretion to our membership is a reminder of the need to consider enlarging the numerical strength of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council, so that all the geographical areas may be assured of adequate representation in the various organizations of the United Nations.

To some observers the Assembly gave the appearance at the end of last week of being a circus and a drama of personalities. Whatever the views held in this regard, this is the most representative gathering

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of world and national leaders in all history. This meeting symbolizes the bringing together of the cultures and philosophies of all races. We must make of it a testament to the capacity of rational men to achieve rational relations, to live at peace and to practise brotherhood and the raising of standards everywhere in the world.

The United Nations constitutes the greatest hope for the middle and small powers for the new and weak states, indeed, for all the countries of mankind, the strong, the powerful, as well as the weak, and of every social or political system.

The United Nations is at a critical stage in its development. It faces a threat to its very existence.

The Assembly has heard from the leaders of its two most powerful members. Mr. Khrushchov, in a gigantic propaganda drama of destructive misrepresentation, launched a major offensive in the cold war while giving lip service to the United Nations which would be destroyed by his proposal for a triumvirate. His speech could not have been intended to bring the world closer to peace, yet to bring the world closer to peace is the reason we are here.

In a restrained, wise and conciliatory speech, President Eisenhower presented a constructive programme for a world community at peace. The President opened the door to international conciliation and world fellowship. Mr. Khrushchov tried to shut that door.

I reject categorically the unjust and intemperate attacks that have been made on the office and person of the wholly dedicated and impartial Secretary-General. The proposal of the Soviet Government to replace the Secretary-General by a three-man praesidium requiring unanimous agreement to act is a transparent plan to undermine the prestige and authority of the United Nations. Having thwarted the United Nations so often in the Security Council through the exercise of the veto, the Soviet Union now seems bent on destroying the United Nations by neutralizing its power to proceed effectively and promptly in emergencies as they arise.

Canada is opposed to this absurd proposal which would reduce the United Nations to innocuity and indecision.

The events in the Congo have given rise to one of the most challenging situations which the United Nations has ever had to face, and the results so far attained are a demonstration of what international co-operation can achieve when its members are determined to lend it full support.

Canada has played its part in the United Nations operation in the Congo by providing, at the request of the United Nations, specially qualified personnel -- signals, communications, air transport -- and emergency food supplies. Other nations have responded expeditiously to requests for assistance from the Secretary-General.

One of the larger tasks of the Assembly will be to ensure that sufficient support is forthcoming to sustain the United Nations in its efforts to revive the financial and economic life of the Congo. I take this opportunity, Mr. President, to assure the Assembly that Canada will assume an equitable share of this burden.

Experience in the Congo has demonstrated the need to have military forces readily available for service with the United Nations. For its part the Canadian Government has held in reserve a battalion transportable by air, earmarked for such service. That experience has emphasized as well the need for a nucleus of a permanent headquarters military staff to be established under the United Nations.

Canada's views on the Congo and the larger African problem may be summarized. The African continent must not become the focus of an East-West struggle; it must be free from the direct interference of the major Powers. The African nations must be permitted to work out their own destinies, and if they need help, the best source is through the agencies of the United Nations.

Mr. Khrushchov in his speech advocated a Declaration at this Session for "the complete and final elimination of colonial regimes".

It will be generally agreed that, whatever the past, there can no longer be a relationship of master and servant among the states of Africa or elsewhere. He has spoken of colonial bondage, exploitation

and foreign yokes. These views, uttered by the master of the major colonial power in the world today, followed the admission of fourteen new member nations to the United Nations -- all of them former colonies.

Since the last war seventeen colonial areas and territories, comprising more than forty million people, have been brought to complete freedom by France. In the same period some fourteen colonies and territories, comprising half a billion people, have achieved complete freedom within the Commonwealth. Taken together, some six hundred million people in more than thirty countries, most of them now represented in this Assembly, have attained their freedom with the approval, encouragement and guidance of the United Kingdom and France alone and I could go on to name others.

Few can speak with the authority of Canada on colonialism, for Canada was once a colony of both these nations. We were the first country which evolved, over nearly one hundred years, by constitutional processes, from colonial status to independence without severing the family connection.

The Commonwealth now embraces ten nations, including the United Kingdom, all of them voluntary and free members of this Organization from all the continents, comprising one-fifth of the world's population, and representing virtually every race, colour and creed. The process is a continuing one. Indeed, within the next few days Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, will attain its independence and remain in the Commonwealth family.

This Assembly has in its membership graduates of empires, mandates and trusteeships of Britain and the Commonwealth and of other nations. Might I ask how many human beings have been liberated by the U.S.S.R. since the First War? Do we forget how one of the post-war colonies of the Soviet Union sought to liberate itself four years ago, and with what results?

These facts of history invite comparison with the record of Soviet domination over peoples and territories, sometimes gained in the name of liberation, but always accompanied by the loss of personal and political freedom.

The General Assembly is still concerned with the aftermath of the Hungarian uprising of 1956. How are we to reconcile that tragedy with Mr. Khrushchov's confident assertion of a few days ago in this Assembly:

"It will always be the Soviet stand ... that countries should establish systems ... of their own free will and choosing".

What of Lithuania, Esthonia, Latvia? What of freedom-loving Ukrainians and other Eastern European peoples? Mr. Khrushchov said at the same time:

"The very course of historic development at present poses the question of complete and final elimination of the colonial regime ... immediately and unconditionally".

There must be no double standard in international affairs.

I ask Mr. Khrushchov to give to those nations under his domination the right of free elections -- to give them the opportunity to determine the kind of government they want under genuinely free conditions. Then indeed, will his words result in action carrying out the obligations of the United Nations Charter.

One year ago, the world could look forward with hope. There seemed to be promise of a decisive change in the relations among the Great Powers, a trend away from fear and distrust and towards mutual understanding and co-operation. Preparations went forward for the Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee to begin its work in Geneva and for the Summit Conference on which the world had placed such high expectations.

These bright prospects were dimmed in May with the collapse of the Summit Conference, and further darkened in June when the Soviet Government withdrew suddenly from the disarmament negotiations.

The propaganda attacks of the Soviet Union have developed in degree and intensity during the summer. The very violence of these attacks strongly suggested that various issues were being deliberately exploited for the express purpose of raising tension over the widest possible fields of East-West relations.

What good can there be in threats to rain rockets or nuclear bombs on other countries, large and small; to despatch so-called volunteers into situations already dangerously inflamed; to encourage political leaders to follow the line of extremism in the conduct of their relations with other states?

Peoples everywhere are made more fearful and anxious and their fear and anxiety tend to aggravate the tensions around the world.

There should be a return immediately to the path of negotiation which at the outset of this year seemed to be the course that the Great Powers would follow. Again it seems incumbent on this Assembly to press for the resumption of negotiations on as broad a front as possible, but particularly as regards the main issues which divide the U.S.S.R. and its allies, from the Western Powers. There is no other road to the relaxation of tension.

The paramount issue is disarmament. The major Powers possess the nuclear capacity for mutual destruction -- indeed, for the annihilation of all mankind. The middle and smaller Powers, if they remain silent, may become the helpless victims of a nuclear catastrophe. Quite apart from our instinct for self-preservation, we are conscious of the futility and wanton waste involved in preparations for war, at a time when mankind is faced with such massive peace-time challenges.

It cannot too often be repeated that, without a return to negotiation, we cannot hope to arrest the arms race or to begin the process of disarmament. This General Assembly has a heavy responsibility to ensure that further time will not be lost before effective negotiations are renewed.

The tragedy of the Ten-Power negotiations was that the breakdown occurred at a time when there had already been an appreciable narrowing of the gap between the Soviet and Western positions.

My conviction in this regard was made plain to Mr. Khrushchov in my letter to him of June 30th in which I also appealed to him to authorize his representatives to return to the negotiating table. Appeals of this kind went unheeded -- indeed even the unanimous voice of the Disarmament Commission was disregarded when, at the August meeting, it called for the earliest possible continuation of disarmament negotiations. I believe it is imperative for this Assembly to reaffirm the appeal of the Disarmament Commission.

There is no shortage of plans or principles. No fewer than four disarmament plans, and two sets of principles have been advanced in the past twelve months. Despite the Soviet withdrawal there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the Ten-Nation forum, whose working methods could be adjusted by agreement. Canada has already suggested the appointment of a neutral Chairman with this in mind, and would always be prepared to examine other constructive suggestions. What is lacking is not appropriate machinery, but mutual confidence and a genuine will on the part of the Soviet side to negotiate. That confidence can be promoted by dispelling the kind of secrecy which clouds preparations for war and keeps alive the fear of surprise attack. The leader of the Soviet Union speaks often of co-existence. There can be no easy co-existence with the unknown -- no easy co-existence where on one side there is a curtain of concealment.

Canada is prepared to make available for international inspection and control any part of Canadian Arctic territory in exchange for a comparable concession on the part of the U.S.S.R. Why has the leader of the Soviet Union, if he believes truly in disarmament and peace, ignored this offer?

What could illustrate more clearly the cynicism of the Soviet Government in the field of disarmament than Mr. Khrushchov's attempt to make a resumption of disarmament talks conditional upon acceptance of the demands of the Soviet Union for a fundamental change in the office of the Chief Executive of the United Nations? This is just another illustration of the uncompromising rigidity of the Soviet Union.

If we are ever to cope with the growing problem of disarmament, we must make a start on actual measures, consistent with the more comprehensive plans related to ultimate goals.

As to the kind of measures which deserve the most urgent attention, I have frequently had occasion to urge publicly that immediate consideration should be given to the following:

1. The systematic control of missiles designed to deliver nuclear weapons of mass destruction;
2. the designation and inspection of launching sites for missiles;
3. the abolition of biological and chemical weapons;
4. the outlawing of the outer space for military purposes and especially a ban on the mounting of armaments on orbital satellites;
5. cessation of the production of fissionable material for weapons and the conversion of existing stocks to peaceful purposes;
6. an end to nuclear testing; and,
7. the development of adequate peace-keeping machinery within the framework of the United Nations to ensure peace and security in the world community after disarmament had been achieved.

I need hardly stress the significance of early agreement on measures like these, carried out under appropriate verification and inspection, for control is the essential element in any disarmament agreement.

With every month that passes, technical developments emphasize the pressing need for orderly legal arrangement and regulations in Outer Space. Jurisdiction in outer space must be assured for scientific and peaceful purposes only, and all nations, great or small, should have equal rights.

The objective must be to create a regime which will ensure:

1. that the exploration and uses of outer space shall be devoted solely to scientific and peaceful purposes;
2. that no celestial body shall be considered as capable of appropriation by any state;
3. that space vehicles shall be identified by a system of registration of launchings, call signs, markings and current orbital and transit characteristics;

4. that frequencies for communications with and among space vehicles shall be allocated on a rational and agreed basis.

The complexity of these tasks requires that the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space begin its work without further delay.

While Mr. Khrushchov dwelt at length on the evils of colonialism, he had very little to say about economic assistance to the less developed countries of the world. There was no pledge by the Soviet Union to make increased contributions to United Nations programmes of economic and technical assistance. I would ask the Assembly to compare objectively the most generous offer of material assistance made before this Assembly by President Eisenhower with the empty Soviet proposal for a mere declaration.

There is an urgent need to increase the flow of international economic aid to the less developed countries, especially to the newly independent states of Africa. The material resources available for economic assistance through the United Nations and other programmes must be very greatly increased if the needs of Africa are to be met without impairing plans for assistance in other areas.

Canada regards economic and technical assistance as a form of co-operation for world-wide stability and prosperity and we do not condone the imposition upon new nations in Africa or elsewhere of any particular social, economic or political order.

Canada will not only maintain its contributions to aid programmes at their present high level but will make increases. We trust that other member states will find it possible to do likewise, whether within the United Nations framework or through other channels.

In this Assembly we are, of course, primarily concerned with what the United Nations can do, but the need is so great that every source of assistance in addition to the United Nations programmes should be utilized to the fullest possible extent.

Canada naturally has a family concern for those countries achieving independence within the Commonwealth of Nations.

Last week, a new programme, to be known as "The Special Commonwealth African Aid Programme", was publicly launched. For this purpose Canada will, subject to Parliamentary sanction, make a contribution of $10,500,000 over three years towards the development of African countries within the Commonwealth, including some of the dependent territories.

While the greater part of this bilateral programme will be in the form of technical assistance and aids in education, some assistance in the field of capital investment is not precluded.

We regard bilateral assistance within the Commonwealth association as complementary to the United Nations programme in Africa, and we will take every means to ensure that bilateral aid is closely co-ordinated with the United Nations programmes.

Last year Canada doubled its subscription to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in line with the general increase forthcoming from all members, and added a further $100,000,000.

This year we are making financial provision for our contribution to the International Development Association -- a contribution which is related to our enlarged contribution to the International Bank.

Canada believes that the United Nations Special Fund and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance are performing a vital task in an effective manner. We will, therefore, be increasing our contributions to these two programmes and the specific amounts will be announced in due course. The Canadian Delegation will also be ready to support a reasonable expansion in the regular programmes of technical assistance which are administered under the authority of the Secretary-General.

One of these -- the OPEX programme -- has proved its effectiveness in providing much needed assistance to new countries in developing their administrative services. Canada is convinced that the OPEX experiment is worthy of the Assembly's support on a permanent and expanded basis.

Canada has been considering a complementary proposal whereby

there will be established a roster of Canadian experts in various fields -- ready at short notice to be sent under United Nations auspices to newly independent states requesting them. They might, for example, assist in setting up or restoring civil administration under circumstances such as those in the Congo or in disaster areas. National action of a stand-by nature on the part of member states is obviously desirable to supplement the United Nations OPEX proposal.

Among the fields from which it is suggested experts might be recruited are: medicine, public health, sanitation, public welfare, communications, transportation, distribution of supplies, and police services. It may be best, however, for member countries to ready themselves in fields in which they are specially qualified.

To set up what might be called an "Experts Bank" would make for administrative stability and make it unnecessary to rely on a crash recruiting campaign for this purpose after the need arises.

The problem of feeding the millions of chronically hungry and undernourished peoples of the world is tragic and urgent. The urgency is heightened by the existence not only of great surpluses of cereals and other foodstuffs in some more fortunately situated countries, but also the capacity in many of these countries to increase greatly their agricultural production.

Canada's surplus of wheat alone stood at 536 million bushels last July 31st. Surplus food, piled up in sterile storage, cannot be justified when so many human beings lack adequate food and nutrition.

I am well aware, as the Food and Agriculture Organization has stated in its "Freedom from Hunger" campaign, that agricultural surpluses of the more advanced countries could at best afford only a temporary relief which, measured against the scale of total world need, would even then be incomplete.

Much will therefore have to be done by the food-deficit countries themselves to raise their own levels of production. It should not, and indeed could not, be for the surplus-producing and food-deficit countries alone to attempt to shoulder this immense burden. It should be the responsibility of the United Nations as a whole to meet this major challenge.

A few countries cannot be expected to underwrite the costs of transferring their surpluses to nations in need, and I hope that other countries represented at this Assembly will also be prepared to join together in contributing to a solution of truly world-wide scope to this pressing problem of the world's suffering and starving peoples.

Canada is acutely aware of their needs. In the last three years, Canada's contributions of wheat and flour to under-developed countries have amounted to $56,000,000, and much has also been done by others. But more is needed, and the Canadian Government therefore welcomes and commends the suggestion made by President Eisenhower last week that this Assembly should seriously consider devising some workable scheme along the lines of the "Food for Peace" programme -- Canada envisages a world "Food Bank" to provide food to member states through the United Nations.

Such a scheme would require the establishment of concerted machinery which would take account of established trading patterns in wheat and flour marketing and co-ordinate the individual surplus disposal programmes to improve the effective utilization of wheat both to raise standards of nutrition and as a means of assisting economically under-developed countries.

Mr. President, the International Court of Justice, as the judicial arm of the United Nations, needs the power and the authority to play a larger and more effective role. All members of the United Nations are automatically parties to its statute, which forms an integral part of the United Nations Charter. Canada accepts the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court except in matters of a domestic nature, with the Court deciding whether a particular issue is or is not of a domestic nature. It is to be deplored

that less than half of the membership of the United Nations has declared its readiness to accept the Court's compulsory jurisdiction and that the newly-emergent states, almost without exception have so far not found themselves able to accept the authority of the Court.

I have spoken for Canada, a middle Power large enough to bear responsibility but not so large as to have traditions of national power or aspirations which might arouse fears or suspicion. A nation of North America, we have our roots deep in two European cultures -- those of Britain and France -- the equality of which is enshrined and preserved in the Canadian Constitution.

By the accident of history and geography, we find ourselves squarely between the two greatest Powers on earth. We have no fortresses facing either, and we want to live at peace with our Northern neighbours as we lived so long with our Southern neighbours. In any conflict between them Canada would be the battle ground.

The world is passing through two great human experiences -- the thrust of technology and the thrust of political and social change -- each of them moving with rising, almost frightening, speed. Technology has given mankind new perspectives for a better life.

Can we control these revolutions of science and society? Can we harness them for the common good and prevent them from upsetting the all too fragile foundations on which peace rests today? That is our task.

We hear voices speak of victories for propaganda. We are not here in this Assembly to win wars of propaganda; we are here to win victory for peace. We have had enough of propaganda -- of confusion, fears and doubts. Mankind's cry today is not for propaganda, it is for truth. We are not mustered in the United Nations for any race or creed or ideology; we are here for the hosts of humanity, for the people, great and small.

Peoples and nations wait upon us; man's hopes call upon us to say what we can do.

Let us not leave this place without some hope for mankind. Let

us instead, say to the peoples that death's pale flag shall not again be raised in war, and that fear shall be lifted from the hearts and souls of men.

For this could be our last chance to say it.

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