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An Address to the United Nations General
Assembly in New York on September 23, 1966,
by the Secretary of State for External Affairs,
the Honourable Paul Martin.

...It is my intention this morning to discuss several areas of endeavour which in the opinion of the Delegation of Canada demand our particular attention if the United Nations is to develop as an influential force for peace in the world. I propose to say something about the Secretary-General and his office, the problems of establishing international peace and security, including peace keeping. I propose to speak to you about the war in Vietnam, about disarmament, about economic and social progress and about the grave problems in southern Africa.

I should like, first of all, to pay tribute to the leadership and example of the Secretary-General. He has done much to inspire our joint endeavours over the past five years. He has said that no man is indispensable in the function which he himself is performing with such distinction. But, notwithstanding the difficulties to which he has called attention, the guidance which he has provided to our work, his sense of responsibility, his qualities of compassion and understanding and, above all, his capacity to speak and to act in the name of mankind, are indispensable to the United Nations. I really fail to see at this time how they can be separated from the person of the Secretary-General. His departure would be a heavy blow.

May I say, too, that I strongly endorse the determination of the Secretary-General to maintain and develop his office as a vital reality within the United Nations system. In this, he is following the tradition established by Sir Eric Drummond in the days of the League of Nations and by his own predecessors in the United Nations.

Let me turn now to those tasks which require our collective understanding and goodwill: first, the general subject of peace keeping. A year has gone by since the General Assembly established a committee to study all aspects of peace keeping. A year has passed, too, since it was decided that the financial difficulties of the organization should be overcome by voluntary contributions from the whole membership. My Government regrets that on both these issues the past 12 months have seen little advance.

Little progress has been made in resolving the financial problems of this organization. It may be that some governments are awaiting the outcome of the study of the Committee of Fourteen. This report is now before us, and I hope that those who have not contributed as yet will do so now.

However, perhaps even more important, in the long run, than the need to meet the financial deficit is the failure of the Committee we set up last year to come to grips with the task of completing its comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations. It is easy to explain away this failure as an after-effect of the crisis which seized the Assembly two sessions ago, but we have had a year to think things over. Surely the time has come to solve this problem.

There are a small number of members which do not share the view of the majority about the nature and value of the contribution the United Nations has made -- a contribution which it can continue to make -- through its peace-keeping activities. My Government believes that the views of this minority must be respected, even if we do not share their views. We appreciate that we may have to accept the limitations thus imposed, particularly with respect to the positions held by some of the great powers on the principle of collective financial responsibility. But even if these limitations are accepted, there remains much to be done. Let me suggest some examples of what the Canadian Delegation believes can be done.

First, we think that the time has come to respond to the proposal put forward by the Secretary-General in 1964 that studies should be made on the means of improving preparations for peace-keeping operations.

Secondly, we think that the time has come for the Security Council and its Military Staff Committee to re-examine the possibilities for negotiating agreements with member states for the provision of armed forces, assistance and facilities to be made available to the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Charter.

Thirdly, we think that, without prejudice to any action which may be taken by the Security Council, member states should be encouraged to inform the Secretary-General of the kinds of forces or facilities they would be prepared to provide for duly authorized peace-keeping operations.

Fourthly, we have already agreed by a large majority in this Assembly that certain principles should govern the sharing of the costs of peace-keeping operations involving heavy expenditures. It should now be possible to convert these principles to uniformly applied practices.

We believe that measures of the kind that I have just described are in accordance with the Charter, and that they can be carried out without prejudice to the position of any individual member. My Government believes that action to maintain and strengthen the peace-keeping capacity of the United Nations will command the support of the majority of the membership, and we are ready, if that seems appropriate, to put forward specific proposals for consideration by the Assembly.

Experience has shown that the burden of meeting peace-keeping commitments has fallen on a small number of member states and has tended to go on and on. It becomes extremely difficult to terminate such commitments. Indeed, the price of peace keeping is small compared to the costs of war. I should have thought, therefore, that we would all be ready to pay our share of the cost. The risk of allowing existing operations to become ineffectual, or of failing to establish peace-keeping forces needed in the future, could well be very high. If this is acknowledged, it surely follows that support for, and contributions to, these operations should be more widespread, for the consequences of not supporting them might well turn out to impose heavier demands and graver dangers on the international community as a whole. In any event, I do not believe it is fair to expect that a minority of countries will continue indefinitely to bear the burden if the majority show little disposition to study the problems of peaceful settlement and to help share the costs of peace keeping.

Related to the subject of peace keeping is the question of the financial solvency of the United Nations. Canada welcomed the proposal of France at the last session that we investigate the financial and administrative practices of the organization. We were glad to participate in the ad hoc Committee of Experts appointed to make this investigation. We regard the report of the Committee of Experts as a document of the highest importance, and we shall press for the implementation of its recommendations, both by the United Nations itself, and by all the other members of the United Nations system. We hope, in particular, that the recommendations will lead us to focus our efforts on essentials by the rigorous application of priorities, and to adjust rates of growth of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies in accordance with the availability of resources, both human and financial.

In our concern with the problems of peace keeping, we must not fail to give attention also to the fundamental question of the peaceful settlement of disputes. It was unfortunate that, at a time when the Security Council had before it a long list of disputes, some dating back nearly 20 years, the General Assembly was at the last session unprepared to act on a proposal for a study of the procedures of peaceful settlement. Surely we have everything to gain and nothing to lose from a careful examination of past procedures and an impartial appraisal of future possibilities.

I listened yesterday with the greatest interest to the statement of Mr. Goldberg. At the last General Assembly, my Government took the position that in the General Assembly we could not avoid a discussion of the war in Vietnam, and I was heartened yesterday not only by what Mr. Goldberg himself had to say about Vietnam but by the initiative he took, in discussing this matter in this forum, in inviting our participation in that discussion and in urging all of us, as members of this organization, collectively and individually, to do what we could to try to bring an end to this conflict.

Our concern with peace keeping and peaceful settlement seems all the more justified against the background of the conflict in Vietnam. This is, in the judgement of my Government, by far the most dangerous issue now facing the world.

Wherever armed conflict breaks out, it involves commitments of power and prestige and the longer it continues the more difficult it becomes to reverse the course of events, the more difficult it becomes to bring into play the machinery of peaceful negotiation and settlement. In the face of such a conflict, can the international community really stand by and allow matters to develop to the point where all avenues of peaceful recourse are irrevocably closed?

I considered last year, and I consider now, that this organ, this particular institution in the United Nations, as opposed to the Security Council, has the obligation to contribute to peace in Vietnam. I think it is inconceivable that we should proceed with our meeting as if this threat to the safety of mankind did not exist. Even if in present circumstances the Security Council cannot deal effectively with this matter and some other framework may be appropriate, I continue to believe that it is the duty of this body to express its deepest concern over the war in Vietnam. We must urge the path of negotiation on all involved. We must persist in this effort until negotiations are begun.

I know that there are differences between us about the origins of this conflict and how it can be brought to an end. I know how difficult the issues involved in this conflict are. For 12 years Canada has served, with India and Poland, on the International Commission in Vietnam. In that time we have witnessed at first hand the erosion of the cease-fire agreement of 1954. We have known, and we still experience, the frustrations of the observer who is powerless to prevent what is happening before his eyes.

The Secretary-General has been untiring in his search for a settlement of the conflict. In doing so, he has acted in clear and conscientious recognition of the responsibilities which attach to the world community in this difficult and vital problem.

There are those who say that the time for a settlement of this conflict is not ripe. For my part, I cannot accept this judgement. The road to peace in Vietnam will not be easy and it may not be quick, but a start on that road must be made.

There are different ways in which a start might be made. For our part, we are guided by a number of basic considerations. The Canadian Government has repeatedly emphasized in its belief that an exclusively military solution is not possible. We believe that only a political settlement which takes into account the legitimate interests and aspirations of all concerned and all involved can restore peace and stability in that country. In the interests of promoting a peaceful settlement, we ourselves have used all the diplomatic channels available to us to see whether there is any contribution we could make towards resolving the problem.

I have mentioned the role of my country as a member of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam. We have attempted to develop our responsibilities into opportunities for constructive action. It still seems to us that the Commission, on which India, Poland and Canada serve, can provide a means of facilitating contacts between the two sides. We have also not excluded the possibility that the Commission might help the parties to scale down hostilities as a means of eventual disengagement.

It is discouraging to us that our efforts, like those of others, have not yielded the results intended. None the less, it continues to be the conviction of the Government of Canada that efforts to promote a peaceful settlement of this war should not, and must not, be abandoned, and, as I said a moment ago, I have carefully noted the statement made yesterday by Ambassador Goldberg and particularly the significant questions which he addressed to the Government in Hanoi. Against this background, it is all the more essential that channels for contacts between the two sides be developed and maintained to prepare the way for negotiations whenever they are possible. We also believe that such channels are important in circumstances where the risk of misunderstanding and miscalculation is ever present. In my Government's view, it is essential that the attention of the world community should not be diverted from the urgent necessity of a diplomatic solution. For these reasons, we believe that a continuing effort must be made through whatever openings may be available to us, individually or collectively, to explore any possible avenues that may lead to a reversal of the present course of events in Vietnam.

However, it is a fact that the capacity of this organization to play a useful role in the Vietnam conflict will be called into question as long as certain parties involved in that conflict are not members of this organization and are not bound by the terms of the Charter. I am not saying that, if they were members, the United Nations would be able to settle the conflict. I am saying that the organization would have a better chance of doing so if those parties were sitting here today. I know that there are fundamental obstacles -- great obstacles. Where two governments claim sovereign and, therefore, exclusive jurisdiction over the same people and territory and, more particularly, where each refuses any rights to the other, then we cannot oblige them to sit down together in these precincts. Nevertheless, I feel bound to say that there is a growing opinion in my country that, if this organization is to realize its potential capacities, all nations, and especially those which, like continental China, represent a significant portion of the world's population, must be represented here.

I noted what Mr. Goldberg had to say on this subject yesterday and I would like to think -- and I am expressing my personal view -- that he advanced the position of his country considerably in his statement of yesterday.

A solution to this problem of representation has eluded us for a long time; in spite of impelling reasons, I cannot say whether it will be possible for us to resolve this question within the next few weeks, or within the next few months. However, universality must remain our objective.

Peace keeping and, for that matter, all machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes, is essentially responsive to specific situations. Men have long dreamed of a more positive concept, the development of a world-wide peace and security system in which individual nations would abandon possession of the means of waging war. This is all the more necessary in view of military developments over the past two decades, and especially the acquisition of devastating military nuclear power by a few countries.

So it is from the point of view that Canada has approached disarmament negotiations. We share, of course, the common objectives of an agreed system of general and complete disarmament which would give security to all nations and

thereby ensure our own. However, in present circumstances, we must pursue partial objectives both for their intrinsic value and as a foundation for future progress. This has been the function of the negotiations in the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee since the last session of the Assembly. While we are disappointed that the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee has had only limited success, we nevertheless consider that it remains the best available forum for the negotiation of arms-control agreements.

There is no cause more urgent than to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. No single measure, however, will provide a solution. A series of measures directed to various facets of the issue will be required.

First, there is widespread agreement that a non-proliferation treaty is imperative. On the central issue of the definition of proliferation, we believe that the formula must prevent nuclear weapons from passing into the control of additional states or groups of countries. This should not be inconsistent with legitimate measures of collective defence. The exhaustive discussion of non-proliferation by the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee in Geneva has made it quite clear what the obstacles to a final agreement are, and it is to be hoped that the great powers will find it possible to remove these obstacles and to leave the way clear for the agreement which the world so greatly wants and needs.

Secondly, as an essential corollary to a non-proliferation agreement, we think that the nuclear powers and the United Nations should urgently consider ways of extending meaningful guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon states who have foregone the right to acquire nuclear weapons. We think that such states should have assurances for their security against nuclear attack or the threat of it.

Thirdly, it is in our view essential that, if such a treaty is to be effective, and if it is to inspire confidence, some means of verification should be included. We have taken a stand at Geneva for a provision incorporating the mandatory application of International Atomic Energy Agency or equivalent safeguard to all international transfers of nuclear materials and equipment for peaceful purposes.

Fourthly, we must persist in our efforts to devise an acceptable formula for a treaty banning nuclear tests in all environments. To this end, Canada has sought to further the science of teleseismic detection by increasing our capacity to process data from seismic arrays and by supporting increased international exchanges of such data.

Fifthly, we support the efforts being made in Latin America and in Africa to establish nuclear-free zones. We hope it may be possible subsequently for such zones to be established elsewhere in the world where conditions are appropriate.

Sixthly, we believe that progress towards effective measures of arms control requires the participation of all the principal world powers in the discussion of these questions. We think that the non-aligned countries have a special role in trying to persuade the People's Republic of China to participate in such discussions.

Seventhly, we believe that the idea advanced by the Secretary-General in the introduction of his annual report -- for a comprehensive study of the consequences of the invention of nuclear weapons -- is an interesting suggestion which merits careful consideration.

As a member of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, I am conscious of the frustration and discouragement that go with negotiations which seem to be getting nowhere. The fact is that we have no other choice. We must persist in these efforts, for the elusive prize is the peace we all seek, and failure, we know, could have tragic consequences for us all.

The maintenance of peace and security, of which I have been speaking, may be the first of our purposes under the Charter, but it is probably not the purpose which is uppermost in the minds of most of our peoples. They are concerned, above all, by their aspirations for greater well-being and dignity.

During the past 20 years an organized assault on the obstacles to economic and social development has steadily gathered momentum under the aegis of this organization. By contrast with 1945 (and Mr. Gromyko, who shares with me, and perhaps with very few others in this forum, direct experience of that period, will recall the time when aid to developing countries was no more than a tentative experiment in international co-operation, in 1965 more than \$10 billion in public and private capital moved to the developing world from the industrialized countries with market economies. A decade ago, the resources administered by this organization, or by the family of United Nations organs, amounted to \$186 million. Today they approach half a billion dollars annually. Measured by the standards of the past, then, the progress which has been made has been formidable. Confronted by the needs of the future, it is demonstrably not enough.

Frankly, I have been appalled at the recent projections of the world food situation. They reveal how drastically world food reserves have fallen in the course of the last five years, and how grave -- grave is the word -- is the prospect of an overall world food deficit no later than 1985.

For the immediate future, we must maintain the recent upward thrust in the flow of development assistance. In particular, we must devote much greater attention to short-term and long-term measures designed to cope with the problem of growing food shortages. While I recognize that aid is only one ingredient in the drive to accelerate the development process, particularly in the agricultural sector, I cannot help feeling that it will be a vital one.

In my country, we are trying to translate that conviction into action. We have diversified the nature of our assistance and the terms on which it is being given. Last year we supplemented our technical assistance and grant aid with soft loans, extending 50-year credits at no interest, with a nominal service charge and a ten-year grace period. This year we have gone further. The service charge has been abolished, our regulations governing the content of grant aid have been relaxed, and we have introduced a new category of loans, mid-way between hard and soft, which will be granted on a 30-year basis at 3 percent interest to countries whose economic circumstances so warrant.

Total aid resources available from Canada in the current fiscal year will be over \$300 million, having increased on the average by \$50 million a year since 1963. Subject to economic and other relevant circumstances, the expansion of the Canadian aid programme will continue. We have set our sights on the aid target of one per cent of national income recommended by the General Assembly. We shall do our utmost to reach it.

In the field of human rights, I am pleased to say that Canada has signed the Convention on Racial Discrimination. We regard this as an important addition to the body of law on human rights, because for the first time implementation measures have been incorporated which we believe may form a pattern for future legislation in this field. It is our hope that the adoption of this Convention will be followed by the completion of the draft Covenants on human rights and by the adoption of the convention on religious intolerance and the establishment of a United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. These additional measures would be a worthy accomplishment for 1968, the International Year for Human Rights.

We have given much thought to our contribution to the programme for the International Year for Human Rights in 1968, and we have decided that the most useful contribution we could make would be to subject our own record, our own practices, to critical examination, drawing on all the resources of the community for this purpose. Complacency is a disease from which we all suffer. So our objective will be to remove the vestiges of discrimination at home -- discrimination involving race, creed or sex -- and to strengthen the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms by a continuing process of education and by subjecting violations to exposure and public attention. I am confident that we shall be able to carry out a programme of this kind successfully because of the enthusiastic support for the cause of human rights which is displayed by voluntary bodies in my own country.

A principal area of conflict over racial discrimination and the denial of human rights is unquestionably southern Africa. As a signatory to the Charter, we are concerned over the absence of progress towards the acceptance of the principle of self-determination in certain non-self-governing territories in Africa and by the stubborn denial by the South African Government of political and human rights. Non-self-governing peoples should enjoy these basic political, social and economic rights promised to them under the Charter and also by those who have given a sacred trust to help them towards self-government.

Canada is deeply concerned about the situation in Rhodesia. Since the illegal declaration of independence by the Smith régime, members of this organization have acted together with the United Kingdom Government to adopt various measures designed to end the present situation and to make it possible for that territory to move towards independence on the basis of majority rule. The great majority of governments at this table have co-operated in these measures.

Canada has refused to recognize the régime, has severed economic relations with it, has participated in an oil airlift to Zambia and is providing other economic assistance to the people of Zambia in the difficult situation created for them by the Rhodesian problem.

During the past few months, and the past few weeks, the members of the Commonwealth have anxiously and closely followed the developments in Rhodesia. The United Nations, for its part, has taken important, even historic, decisions.

The fact is, however, that the actions taken by the international community have so far failed to end the illegal régime. I am well aware that there are many who feel that in these circumstances the best answer is armed force. My Government has deep misgivings, however, about such an answer. Would the use of force achieve the results we desire? If not, might it not hurt those whom it was designed to help? This is the kind of question we must ask ourselves. We believe that we should concentrate on seeing that the measures now in operation are applied with maximum effectiveness and that they are strengthened and supplemented in areas where this is practical, so that constitutional government can be restored and independence on the basis of majority rule attained.

The communiqué of the Commonwealth prime ministers' meeting notes a British willingness to co-sponsor in the Security Council a resolution for effective and selective mandatory economic sanctions against Rhodesia before the end of this year, if the illegal situation has not ended by then, and gives full Commonwealth support for such a Security Council resolution. We think such a resolution would indeed be desirable, since we have noted that, although most governments are supporting fully the measures advocated in Security Council resolutions, there have been some instances where this is not the case. My Government is particularly concerned by the fact that some markets are still open to Rhodesian exports, especially minerals and tobacco.

At the forefront of the problems before this session is the question of South West Africa. Since the recent judgement of the International Court was not concerned with the substantive aspects of this question, it does not in any way invalidate previous advisory opinions on the accountability of South Africa to the international community. My Delegation is studying the various aspects of the problem with close attention and will indicate its position on whatever proposals are made as the debate on South West Africa progresses. An important concern of my Delegation will be the possibility of these proposals achieving their stated objectives.

The balance-sheet of our achievements is written each year in this debate. I have tried today -- too long I am afraid, however -- to show several areas of endeavour which demand particular attention if the United Nations is to develop into a potent force for peace in the world. But I suggest that our collective experience has revealed a number of useful lessons.

In the first place, it is clear that we must not allow great-power differences over certain admittedly very difficult issues to induce a fruitless passivity in the membership. We must continue to search for opportunities for initiatives which are both constructive and realistic.

Secondly, there is an evident need for the Assembly to re-establish the free processes of debate and negotiation on draft resolutions. Only in this way can we hope to promote agreements that will attract the meaningful support of member governments when it comes to implementation.

Thirdly, we need to exercise greater respect for the rights of others under the Charter. This involves restraint by the great powers in the use of their privileges; restraint by the smaller powers in the observance of orderly procedures; restraint, above all, in the pursuit of national objectives where these are at variance with the purposes and principles of our constitution.

Finally, on the eve of the hundredth birthday of my country, the Government and people of Canada pledge their loyalty and their support to the concept of the United Nations and to the ideals it symbolizes and seeks to attain for the benefit of mankind.

...The Secretary-General, the present incumbent, has the confidence of the Government and people of Canada. No man who has ever held this office, no man who has ever aspired to this office, has been so widely endorsed, as we know from events during the past few weeks. We all recognize, as we did three years ago, as the Security Council recognized three years ago, his great personal qualities. But added to this is the great authority which he has gathered in the last few weeks, an authority that we cannot dismiss, in the interest of this organization or in the interest of peace. This commanding authority could be of the greatest value in this critical time in human affairs.

I agree with what the Secretary-General said the other day about his concept of the role of the office of Secretary-General. This was the view, I well remember, of Sir Eric Drummond, in the League of Nations, and of Mr. Avenol, who succeeded him; it was the view of Trygve Lie and of Dag Hammarskjöld; and it is what is implied and implicit in Articles 99 and 100 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Secretary-General -- whoever occupies this post -- must be one who by personal quality and by capacity and by respect has an authority far behind his own person, and that exists today, clearly and demonstrably, in the person of U Thant.

I have the strong conviction -- and I speak this way only because the foreign policy of my country is so embedded in this organization, and because I feel that in the immediate period this organization's future and integrity are involved -- that U Thant's personal attributes and his undoubted global moral authority could be a powerful force in helping to win the war in Vietnam, moving us on to universality in this organization and, I think, to sure guarantees for peace in the world.

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