



Statements and Speeches

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PEACE AND DISARMAMENT FIRST PRIORITY IN CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Notes for a Speech by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Thirty-ninth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, New York, September 25, 1984.

...Eight days ago, the Progressive Conservative government of Canada assumed office. It is appropriate that the first major foreign policy statement outside Canada by our new government should be here at the United Nations. Like all countries, we have urgent problems at home, and we are determined to face them. But the basic reality of Canada is that we are open to the world. Our economy responds to the international economy. Our population comes from, and connects with, all continents and nations. The name of our capital city, Ottawa, is drawn from the Algonquin Indian word "a meeting place", and our history is that of a community where different cultures and contesting interests can meet together. Ever since we have been a sovereign nation, our governments and our people have tried to put our talents to work for the world. We shall continue in that spirit.

Canada was active at the creation of this United Nations, as successive Canadian governments, formed by different parties, have consistently helped this organization to meet its most difficult challenges. I come to this podium in the tradition of Howard Green of Canada, who struggled to achieve a partial test ban treaty, as a first step toward a comprehensive test ban; in the tradition of Lester Pearson, who inspired the concept of peacekeeping; and in the tradition of Paul Martin who helped to end the logjam which prevented the admission of new member states in the UN's early years. Canadians are proud of having contributed to the solution of problems such as these.

In the nearly four decades since the Second World War, the international community has come to count on Canada as a moderating influence in a world beset by extremes. Our new government is in the mainstream of this tradition, and intends to build on it, consistently and pragmatically.

We want to ensure that we are using our influence, and defining our interests, in ways which reflect the contemporary challenges facing Canada and the world. As a new government should, we shall undertake a thorough and public review of Canadian foreign policy, aimed at the creative renewal of a moderate and constructive Canadian role in the world. Citizens of Canada, and friends of Canada, will be encouraged to suggest how the Canadian international tradition can best be applied to the increasing tensions and interdependence of the modern world, including those of the nuclear age.

Mr. President, the frightening facts of the nuclear arms race are well known. The superpowers are developing new kinds of nuclear weapons; more countries are developing nuclear capacities; and the risk rises that terrorist groups could acquire nuclear devices. Physicians and scientists warn that, even for survivors, the world would be virtually uninhabitable after a major nuclear conflict.

But far more threatening than the weaponry are the patterns into which the world has settled. Nuclear arms control negotiations between the superpowers are at a standstill. This stalemate allows other

nuclear states to claim impotence in the arms race, and could encourage states without nuclear weapons to argue that they have a right to acquire them.

If these patterns continue, and the path toward effective nuclear arms control remains blocked, the world will become infinitely more dangerous.

We, therefore, welcome the meeting that will take place in Washington later this week between President Reagan and Foreign Minister Gromyko. We applaud the United States' willingness, expressed so eloquently yesterday by President Reagan, to engage in political consultations on a regular and frequent basis. We hope that the USSR will respond positively to this opportunity to meet and talk.

On these questions, Canada's influence is limited but real. We have no corner on moral authority or technical expertise, but we do enjoy a reputation as a people who are serious about peace and skilled at mediation. Those qualities are critically important in reversing the ominous trends which threaten to unravel arms control. The essential problem today is not moral or technical — neither superpower wants a holocaust; and human ingenuity, which can invent weapons, can devise controls. The problem is political, and this is one of the fora in which we must work together to inch the world away from nuclear devastation.

Some despair that anything constructive can be done in the present state of international tension. They point to the recent lack of progress in virtually every area of arms control. The Canadian view is that something must be done and so it can be done.

The major decisions rest with the superpowers, but the responsibility rests with us all. Multilateral efforts, led and encouraged by the medium and smaller-sized countries, can help improve the atmosphere, and can put specific, workable ideas on the agenda.

Canada, for its part, is determined to continue to play a leading role in the search for peace and disarmament. We believe the nuclear buildup threatens the life of every Canadian, and the existence of human society. Countries like our own must use our influence to reverse that buildup and reduce the danger of destruction. That will be a constant, consistent, dominant priority of Canadian foreign policy.

My country is not neutral in the contest between open and closed societies. We defend, and actively assert, the values of democracy and individual freedom. We believe it is essential to pursue the goals of peace and freedom simultaneously.

We shall seek, through concrete and realistic steps, progress toward a comprehensive test ban treaty. We shall encourage superpower and multilateral discussion on all outer space weapons, and shall commission further studies on how a space weapons ban might be verified. We shall work for the success of next year's Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, in order to prevent the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. We shall bring to bear our technical expertise in verification measures to ensure mutual confidence and security in areas where arms control agreements can be achieved. We

shall encourage agreement on a mutual and balanced reduction of conventional forces in Europe, and hence reduce the danger of escalation to nuclear war. We shall continue to press for a verifiable convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. Canada will continue its financial support of the world disarmament campaign. We shall, in addition, expect that the newly-created Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security will contribute its share of studies and advice on specific arms control proposals and measures to reduce international tension.

Mr. President, since we are new in office, I speak today in more general terms than on future occasions. The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, said that our new government "will play a more active role in the United Nations and its agencies".

Our government is committed strongly to the United Nations. We value our individual relations with other countries, and our role in associations of countries like the Commonwealth and La Francophonie. They are important, but not enough. Smaller and middle powers, in particular, need effective global institutions to make each of our voices heard in the world, and to help us to respond together to the enormous political and economic problems of our century. A dynamic United Nations system is essential for countries like Canada — and equally for the superpowers. Precisely because more communities are looking inward more often, we must strengthen global institutions which bring us together.

In his three consecutive annual reports, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuellar has tried to force us to face up to our responsibilities as member states. Most recently he asks: "Why has there been a retreat from internationalism and multilateralism at a time when actual developments both in relation to world peace and to the world economy would seem to demand their strengthening?"

When are we going to start to answer his uncomfortable questions? One hopes that it will not take a major disaster to jolt us out of our inertia.

The present moment, the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, is a fitting one for each member state to examine its commitment to the UN Charter. This anniversary must mark a renewal for the future, not just a celebration of the past.

A simple re-commitment to the Charter is not enough. Member states must actively work together to strengthen the UN system. The Secretary-General has expressed the hope that, in all our countries, our best thinkers will turn their talents to this task. Let us seize this challenge and give it focus.

An unprecedented conference of 35 leading Canadians, sponsored by the United Nations Association in Canada, will take place October 26 in Ottawa to launch a review of ways to strengthen the UN. Our prime minister and government believe that Canadian parliamentarians should also consider this question and present formal recommendations.

How can we translate the results of this soul-searching, in each of our countries, into collective action to strengthen the UN system in practical ways?

We should consider at this session, as a priority issue, how we, the "friends of the UN", can identify and put into place practical measures to strengthen the UN system.

Any analysis of what is needed to strengthen the UN system must be based upon a realistic assessment of what has gone wrong and what has gone right.

A first thing that has gone wrong is that the Security Council has become increasingly ineffective. We all recognize that the Council does not operate in a vacuum. It will continue to mirror world tensions. But deteriorating relationships between its permanent members must not be allowed to immobilize the Council. We must immunize the Council to the extent that no matter what the crisis and whatever the state of relations among its members, their representatives will continue to talk.

Last year, the members of the Council held a series of private meetings to discuss how to improve the effectiveness of the Council. But the exercise appears to have run out of steam. Even ideas which appear uncontroversial on the surface seem to have been ignored. Why, for example, can the members of the Council not agree to hold regular *in camera* sessions, with the Secretary-General present, to review the Council's and Secretary-General's role in facilitating the solution of current, incipient or potential disputes? A reluctance to talk is no excuse. The Council, at least behind-the-scenes, must function as a multilateral hot-line.

Mr. President, a second failing is that we have not lived up to our own responsibilities as member states of the UN. We have expected the Secretary-General to fill the vacuum, without giving him adequate political support to do the job. We must allow the Secretary-General a greater margin of initiative and independence of action. He has been able on his own to take action in some areas of UN activity. He has, for example, made a promising start in improving the management of the UN's limited financial and human resources; he has used a period of budgetary restraint to begin to weed out low-priority activities. The Secretary-General has also been exerting a positive influence on many intractable international problems. But we must provide him with more political backing. He should be allowed and encouraged to increase his "fact-finding" capacity and his ability to exercise his "good office" in particular situations.

A third thing that has gone wrong is that too much valuable time and resources are being wasted throughout the UN system on extraneous political issues. We all accept the fact that the Security Council and General Assembly are political fora. But, even here, we should avoid the repetition of sterile political debates, the proliferation of resolutions on the same topic, and the scheduling of redundant conferences and meetings.

We must also resist the "over-politicization" that is increasingly infecting the technical parts of the UN system, which are neither mandated nor equipped to handle such issues. It is naive to expect that a certain number of heated political issues will not be raised. It becomes debilitating, however, when political issues begin to frustrate the normal give-and-take between groups in working out consensus on the essential activities of UN organizations. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO), for example, has been a serious offender in recent years. We must step up the momentum to bring UNESCO back into balance.

We must not permit challenges to the universality of membership to undermine the continued visibility of the system. Israel, for example, must retain its right of membership in the UN family of organizations. The Republic of Korea deserves full membership in the UN.

We must not, of course, allow any analysis of the things that have gone wrong to obscure the many things that have gone right within the UN system. We often take for granted the many parts of the systems which are continuing to function well. I shall cite only a few examples.

First, most of the UN Specialized Agencies are continuing to carry out their mandates with distinction and dedication. The International Civil Aviation Organization, as a case in point, was able last spring to approve unanimously an amendment to its constitution making even clearer the existing prohibition against using force against civil aircraft.

Second, in human rights, the distance still to go, and the double standards still at play, cannot obscure the step-by-step progress which has been made. All those who cherish human rights have been heartened by the election of a government of Argentina committed to the restoration of human rights.

Canada hopes that at this session the next important international milestone in human rights will be passed — adoption of a convention against torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment. We must send a message to the world that torture is unacceptable to civilized nations.

Third, the UN's development activities and humanitarian assistance continue to be irreplaceable. In 1984, the United Nations Development Program will generate about \$1 billion in technical assistance to developing countries using the parts of the UN system as executing agencies. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) makes a vital contribution to meeting the development and humanitarian needs of mothers and children. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees and UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, co-ordinate essential humanitarian assistance to refugees.

Fourth, the UN system is also helping to focus upon the most persistent social issues facing society. The UN's designation of 1985 as International Youth Year has encouraged many countries such as Canada to develop a comprehensive national program in this field. The second International Conference on Population, held this past summer in Mexico City, has strengthened the momentum generated on population issued over the past decade and identified emerging problems of global concern. The World Conference on Women, to be held in Nairobi next July, will provide an opportunity to develop forward-looking strategies to stimulate positive changes in the lives of women.

Fifth, under the auspices of the UN system, positive and often innovative legal regimes have been established in such critical fields as law of the sea, trade, outer space, civil aviation, telecommunications and the environment. The progressive extension of the rule of law is fundamental to the whole multi-lateral system.

Mr. President, the record is much less positive in the area of peace and security. We can do more to make creative use of the machinery under the existing Charter to facilitate the peaceful settlement of specific disputes.

My government wants the independence, sovereignty, and genuine non-alignment of Afghanistan restored, and foreign forces withdrawn from that battered country. We support the continued efforts of the Secretary-General and his special representative to accomplish this.

We support the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in their efforts to bring peace to the unfortunate country of Kampuchea, which continues to be occupied unlawfully.

Canada regrets the extension to Central America of East-West confrontation and the related militarization of the area. We applaud the initiative, skill and tenacity of Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico and Panama (the Contadora countries) in their efforts to build a framework of reconciliation in the spirit of the UN Charter. We also welcome the opening of a direct dialogue between the USA and Nicaragua.

We need a negotiated settlement to end the suffering and destruction of the war between Iran and Iraq. We support the Secretary-General in building upon his recent success in obtaining the agreement of the belligerents to cease attacks on civilian population centres. His sending of a team to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons was also a useful action.

Canada hopes that the Lebanese government's current efforts to restore peace and stability in that tragic country will be rewarded. We support Lebanon's territorial integrity and maintain that all foreign troops should withdraw unless present at the request of the Lebanese government. Canadians were appalled by the recent act of terrorism in which so many people were killed and wounded at the US embassy in Beirut.

We strongly support a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute based on Security Council Resolution 242, which provides for the right of all states, including Israel, to live within secure and recognized boundaries. We also support the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to a homeland within a clearly-defined territory, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

We should remind ourselves that UN peacekeeping forces and observer missions continue to be essential in a number of troubled areas of the world. All member states have a responsibility to contribute to the support of these operations. In particular, we ask member states to respond positively to the appeal by the Secretary-General for additional voluntary contributions for the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. While peacekeeping forces can help to reduce the risk of open conflict, lasting peace can be achieved only through reasonable political compromise. In this spirit, we applaud the constructive participation of the leaders of the two Cypriot communities in the proximity talks held during the past two weeks under the auspices of the Secretary-General. We welcome the announced renewal of the exchanges next week, and urge the parties to seize this opportunity for progress toward a just and lasting settlement.

Mr. President, we are all painfully aware that political and economic forces now at play in the global environment are inter-related. What is the record of the multilateral system on the economic front?

The debt crisis has severely afflicted many developing countries. The effects of severe indebtedness on the economic prospects of so many developing countries, on the well-being of their peoples, and on the health of the international financial system as a whole, must remain a major pre-occupation of the international community. Continued efforts will be required by the industrialized countries to ensure that the recovery strengthens and persists and spreads to all countries, developed and developing alike.

Canada will support expanding multilateral efforts to stabilize the debt situation, in line with the decision of major industrial countries, at the London Economic Summit, to confirm their strategy on debt and to implement and develop it flexibly case-by-case. The Commonwealth, too, has been doing important work in this area. My colleague, the Minister of Finance, was invited by Commonwealth finance ministers, in Toronto last week, to recommend to this week's annual meeting of the Bank and Fund that issues, of special importance to developing countries, including debt, be placed on the agenda at the next meeting of the Development Committee. I am encouraged by the agreement of the Interim and Development Committees, in Washington over the weekend, to devote special attention at their meetings next spring, to such matters as debt, adjustment and financial flows in the medium-term perspective.

The courageous adjustment efforts of many developing countries must be continued, but it is also important that adequate financing be provided by the international community. In this respect, the important role that could be played by private investment should not be overlooked. I hope that greater multilateral attention will be given to the medium-term prospects for financial flows to developing countries.

As a country heavily dependent on foreign trade and foreign investment, my government is pledged to maintain close co-operation with its economic partners and to uphold the principles of the open and just multilateral system under which all countries, developed and developing, can prosper. Effective multilateral institutions are essential to prevent parochial responses to economic problems that require common action.

National and international action will be needed to stem protectionist tendencies which are still strong and could threaten trade prospects. The major Western industrialized countries re-dedicated themselves at the London Summit to resist protectionist pressures and to accelerate the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) work program. Our collective ability to fulfil these pledges, and to move toward a new round of multilateral trade negotiations, will be critical in halting the erosion of the open trading system and ensuring that trade will continue to be one of the motors of growth in the world economy. Developing countries, as well, must play their full role in this process.

Meanwhile, there are the urgent questions of human suffering that must be addressed. Our new government intends to maintain Canada's commitment to reaching .7 per cent of the gross national product by 1990 in official development assistance. Despite serious economic problems at home, we shall not turn our backs on the world's disadvantaged peoples. A greater share of our aid budget will be

spent by non-governmental organizations, which have proven their effectiveness in community development programs.

The record of the international community on economic issues is one of achievement, although far from perfect. We must ensure that the specialized institutions that we have created will prove capable of coping with current and future challenges. There is growing support for a pragmatic, issue-oriented approach. Organizations such as the International Monetary Fund/World Bank, GATT, UN Conference on Trade and Development, and others which have specific mandates within the multilateral system, are being encouraged to get on with their jobs with a renewed sense of commitment and co-operation.

As the Secretary-General has emphasized, nowhere is human need greater today than in Africa, where many countries face drought and starvation. The problem of refugees remains of special concern there. So do the debt and balance-of-payments problems that affect African countries. This year Canada is devoting over 40 per cent of bilateral aid to Africa. We have sharply increased our food allocations and raised our contributions to humanitarian relief organizations.

The struggle for freedom and equality in southern Africa is also our common cause. Canada joined with other Commonwealth countries in adopting the 1979 Lusaka Declaration on Racism and Racial Prejudice. We stand by that declaration which reflects our commitment to work for the eradication of the evil of racism. We reject policies designed to perpetuate *apartheid* and continue racial discrimination.

We are also grieved that the people of Namibia are still denied their independence after a century of colonial rule. South Africa must set a date to implement Namibia's independence under Security Council Resolution 435.

Mr. President, I speak here today as a foreign minister conscious of the frustrations of this organization and the limits on its actions. But I first encountered the United Nations as an idea, not an institution – an idea which reached into the comfortable corner of the world where I was born, let me know that famine and war and disease were part of daily life in most of the world, and gave me hope that there was a way we would fight those evils. Viewed from that perspective, the United Nations can be judged, not by volumes of repetitive debates, but by the millions of children who are fed and clothed and living; the wars that were averted or limited or postponed; the hundreds of millions of human lives that have been protected or improved because the idea of the United Nations connects people who can help people who need help.

The idea of the United Nations is as important now as at any time in our history. It forces the comfortable out of complacency. It lifts the desperate beyond despair. It allows today's frustrations to be seen in the light of four decades of lives improved, conflicts reduced, perspectives enlarged.

Mr. President, support for the UN must be based upon a clear-sighted view of current realities. When we list the things that have gone wrong with the UN, we should not forget the things that have gone right. When we rejoice in the things that have gone right we often underestimate the political and

economic problems ahead. We must avoid the trap of blaming the United Nations for our sins and omissions. If we collectively are unable to revitalize the UN system, we shall have to resign ourselves to watching it wither away. That must not happen.

1985, our fortieth anniversary year, can be a turning point in the life of the United Nations. A broad coalition of "friends" of the UN must join forces to renew the effectiveness of global institutions. My government will do its utmost, working with other member states and the Secretary-General, to make these institutions flourish. This is the fortieth birthday present our peoples deserve. Let us prove that life begins at 40.

Last week in Canada. His Holiness Pope John Paul II called for "a new vision of humanity" to inspire nations and individuals in the pursuit of peace and well-being for all. He asked Canadians to do more. Let us all do more.