



Statements and Speeches

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CHANNELLING THE WINDS OF CHANGE INTO COLLECTIVE ACHIEVEMENT

An Address by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Thirty-Fifth Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, September 22, 1980

During the Special Session of the Assembly on economic co-operation, I had the honour of appearing here twice to address the Session. Different evaluations will be made of the results of the Session but none of them will term the exercise a full success. The world's economic problems, however, remain starkly visible: hundreds of millions of lives wasting in poverty; the development goals of many developing nations knocked askew by soaring bills for essential imports; recession in the industrialized world. Solutions are not easily available. The issues are complex. Quite clearly, approaches vary. In many respects, the Special Session's difficulties in reaching agreement reflect the difficulties inherent in the world's economic problems. However, I urge all nations to look towards productive compromise on the negotiating issues so that the process of trying together to deal with the problems can go forward. This General Assembly provides that opportunity.

Meanwhile, governments need to look hard at their own efforts to contribute to economic redressment. As announced to the closing meeting of the Special Session, Canada will, for the rest of the decade, be increasing its aid program. We are also studying other areas where our contribution to development can be improved.

Mr. President, the world which this Assembly reflects is one buffeted by change.

Both a dynamic of development and an irresistible force, change is obviously, in many circumstances, a mixed blessing.

It can be volatile, destabilizing. Northern and Southern methods and cultures meet and sometimes clash. Accelerated aspirations are often frustrated. People fear change: they may reject it, often after breakdowns occur, or suppress its social and political expression, which can be an invitation to revolution.

But change will go on and must go on. We must, whenever possible, make both technological change and social change acts of progress. The task of our world organization is to prompt and channel change into positive and predictable directions. The end lesson, as far as the work of the General Assembly is concerned, is that economic development and the orderly adaptation to its dynamic of change are basic ingredients of peace and security.

For example, I say again that there cannot be authentic or enduring security in the world as long as there is widespread global poverty and economic injustice. Increasingly, we recognize the economic interdependence of the nations of the world. This reflects both an economic fact, and a method of approaching issues. Our interde-

pendence is a sign of changing world relationships and is also a response to the dynamics of rapid change itself.

The North-South dialogue has its political dimension, as can be seen in most world crises. And just as we must accept change in our economic relationships, and reject intervention and the economic subordination of one country by another, so we reject the political and military equivalents. Just as we are strengthening our international instruments for promoting and channelling economic change, so must we continue to strengthen our methods and means for promoting international peace, and social and political justice.

Mr. President, a glance at our political geography can help to illustrate.

Where is there greater evidence of resistance to change than in the perpetuated insult which *apartheid* in South Africa represents to any human being who cares about human dignity? "Oh, but they're beginning to change," I'm told, "don't disturb the process." What process, Mr. President? Where are the changes? A minority of Whites still totally dominates a majority of Blacks through repression, force, and a society and system rooted in racist supremacy. This is not acceptable in any form and it never will be. South Africa must recognize the inevitability of change.

Mr. President, we again welcome Zimbabwe to this body. We applaud the changes which their presence here represents.

Similarly, we look forward to the day when we can welcome the representatives of Namibia to the General Assembly as a member state. After more than three years of intensive United Nations' effort, Mr. Chairman, the settlement expected in Resolution 435 is within our grasp. Technical arrangements are in hand. Only the commitment on the part of South Africa is missing. Right now, the circumstances for reaching a final and peaceful settlement are promising. If left untended, they will only deteriorate. A team of the Secretary-General's officials is to meet shortly with representatives of South Africa in an effort to clear the way for reaching that final settlement. The consequences of continued resistance to change will be severe.

Afghanistan

It is with the deepest and most troubled apprehension that we contemplate Soviet action in Afghanistan, Mr. President. What is the occupation of that non-aligned country if not old-time great power behaviour of the kind the United Nations was formed to eliminate? What has this invasion meant to us all? The process of East-West *détente*, of vital importance to the world community, is now undermined, world peace itself is now more fragile, confidence about intentions is now shaken, non-alignment is certainly now in jeopardy, and lastly, the flouting by the Soviet Union of the solution proposed last January by the huge majority of states in this Assembly, and particularly of the call for the early and unconditional withdrawal of all Soviet troops, inevitably colours our reaction to positions the Soviet Union takes on other issues before this Assembly. We again call on the Soviet Union to restore to Afghanistan the sovereign rights which its people are entitled to expect and deserve.

Kampuchea

Mr. President, Kampuchea. There again, the invasion of a small nation by a powerful

neighbour, to impose its solution, its views, its regime. There again, an outpouring of refugees looking to the world for survival. Is this what some leaders consider Realpolitik? Strike when you can, take what you can? What cynicism, Mr. President. Kampuchea, racked for decades by other peoples' wars, and then by a regime of undistilled destruction is a global concern. Many of us have joined Kampuchea's neighbours to keep the survivors alive and to settle the refugees. But the real problems of the area require a political solution, and we emphatically reject the occupation of Kampuchea, the attempt to control change by force of arms, which Vietnam's invasion by definition represents.

I welcome and support the vigorous efforts of the ASEAN states to promote an equitable solution to the issues. I urge the international community to persevere in this just cause, and not to accept that a *fait accompli* has been imposed by Vietnam.

Middle East

Mr. President, the Middle East. Is that situation to exacerbate this Assembly for the next 30 years? Has the past not taught us how dangerous a state of continual, unresolved tension can be — for the people of the area itself, as well as for the world as a whole? Respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of every state in the area, and for the right of all states, including Israel to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, must remain a cornerstone in efforts to reach a comprehensive solution to the Middle East dispute. There must also be recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Like other peoples, they are entitled to political expression within a defined territory, and to participation in the negotiating process to find a just and comprehensive peace settlement.

The current negotiations have led to a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. There has been progress in dealing with serious problems, but difficulties remain. Further decisions must soon be made or else achievements to date will be jeopardized with all of the consequences that this would entail. Whatever the method or forum, I urge all parties to recognize the force of change, and to move away from confrontation and violence to moderation and compromise.

Mr. President, the above situations are some, but by no means all, of those where there is a threat to world peace through resistance to change, or the recourse to arms to impose change. In different ways, they serve to illustrate the need to abandon prevailing methods to resolve conflicts through collectively developed machinery rather than by reversion to the rule of force. The world will not become more stable in the next decade. Change will accelerate. There is a real probability that some may try to exploit vulnerability to their own advantage. Determination to channel and control the volatile impact of change into constructive, peaceful directions is necessary. First, however, we need to break away from old patterns of approach and attitude.

North-South problems

The North-South dialogue is an obvious example. We must recognize our global responsibilities, but resist the notion that every problem must have a global, generalized solution. I also think that there are issues, and stages of discussion, where bloc-to-bloc negotiation will be less careful. By illustration, I think of the Law of the Sea Conference. There a complicated array of different country groupings arranged to correspond to differing economic, political and even geographic interests, have

wrestled with long-standing questions of principle and tradition. This method has enabled them to draft, in effect, a new constitution for two-thirds of the world's surface in the more pragmatic, realistic, and I believe productive, way which a pluralistic approach can afford. Change demands such departures from accepted dogma and I believe that our approach to North-South issues is clearly in need of both stimulation and reform.

Potential for UN Secretariat

Another area of potential institutional improvement is the United Nations Secretariat itself. The office of the Secretary-General has unique value as an instrument for attenuating conflict. The government of Iran still keeps United States' diplomatic personnel hostages, almost a year after their forceful seizure. Although the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General to arrange a solution have not yet achieved their objective, they illustrate the potential of his office for promoting solutions — at least in other, less unreasonable and chaotic circumstances. In the past 35 years, his predecessors have, in fact, often led the organization into significant developments, such as peacekeeping operations, which improved our collective ability to manage conflict. Yet there is a potential for further improvement, to increase the organization's capability for mediation of conflict.

Cyprus is a case in point. There, we need a two-pronged effort to heal the divisions which have plagued its two communities since shortly after independence. First, peacekeeping efforts should continue. Canadian Armed Forces have served with the United Nations Force in Cyprus for 16 years, and Canada intends to maintain its contribution as long as active efforts to achieve a settlement continue. Second, direct mediation efforts by the Secretary-General and his representatives should be encouraged to promote substantive negotiations with representatives of the two communities, in order to resolve their differences peaceably. In this case, peacekeeping and mediation go hand in hand, both dependent upon the skill and dedication of the United Nations Organization to further our common aim of ensuring peaceful change.

By a similar token, I believe that greater use should be made of the Secretary-General's charter responsibilities in acting with the authority of his office in situations arising from violations of human rights. For many years Canada has introduced and supported proposals in the General Assembly to reinforce the organization's abilities to promote and protect human rights.

I continue to support the concept of a High Commissioner for Human Rights and the strengthening of the Commission on Human Rights' role for review and enquiry. Although the attainment of these objectives may take some time, interim solutions are available. I urge the Secretary-General to use his good office functions where the evidence of human rights violation is sufficiently serious. All states should extend their co-operation to alleviate difficulties in a non-confrontational manner and to further the interests of international co-operation.

Neither the political nor the humanitarian roles which I have suggested demand changes in the United Nations' Charter or fundamentally different mandates from the General Assembly. Rather, these roles rest on a willingness of member states to respect the Charter, to recognize the desirability of channelling the winds of change

into constructive directions, and to abandon old behavioral patterns.

Disarmament

Another area to which the Canadian government attaches special significance is disarmament. At this General Assembly, the mid-point between the First and Second Special Sessions on Disarmament, I welcome the much greater attention which the United Nations gives to the subject, although I regret the lack of specific and ratified agreements on further measures of arms control and disarmament. Are the peoples of the world not entitled to feel impatience, for example, that our governments have still failed to negotiate a nuclear test ban treaty which can be accepted and ratified by all states? Or that a treaty to ban chemical weapons remains blocked by disagreement over means of verification?

Canada is committed to breaking the pattern of madness which spiralling rearmament represents. Our recently appointed Special Ambassador for Disarmament will be working at this Session towards the goals set out by Prime Minister Trudeau two years ago at the Special Session on Disarmament, especially those that restrain and cut back the competition in strategic nuclear weapons. Without restraint in this area, we can have little reason for optimism that the proliferation of nuclear weapons around the world can be stopped. As a first step, we will pursue vigorously the cessation of the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, breaking the patterns of the past, adapting to change, improving our collective machinery — these are the emphases we should give to this Assembly's work. When countries revert to outdated type — by hanging on to privileges, using force, keeping self-serving methods of approach to the issues — our collective achievement is diminished.

Law of the Sea

As an example, may I return briefly to the recent United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea.

The emerging Law of the Sea treaty will be robbed of much of its meaning without universality and durability. Both those conditions will be obtained only if all interested parties commit themselves to a consensus which is fair to all. We have not seen such a consensus in at least one vital area, that of seabed mining. If, for example, the interests of the land-based mineral producers, including Canada and many developing countries, are ignored or overridden by the desire of some states to secure unrestricted access to the mineral riches of the seabed, then the future of the Law of the Sea Treaty may be badly compromised. The problem can only be compounded by states stepping outside of the internationally-agreed framework to play the game by their own set of rules.

In order to bridge the gap between producing and consuming countries and find a common basis of agreement on this issue, we have joined a number of countries from the developing world in initiating an independent United Nations' study to determine the impact of the seabed production formula proposed by the major mineral-consuming states. I hope that the results of the study will encourage a fresh look at the whole question. That fresh look could be crucial to the future of the new convention, which, in turn, is crucial to the future of us all.

The recent law of the sea experience is instructive in two different respects. First, it has demonstrated that serious negotiations, carried on within a sensible, practical framework, can resolve difficult questions involving deep changes in approach to issues where the willingness to do so exists. Second, it demonstrates, in perhaps the most cogent possible way, that no institution, no matter how well conceived or well administered, can function in the absence of agreement on such a fundamental question as adhering to the principle of consensus.

Mr. President, I have spoken about change in the international system and I have tried to underline our collective responsibility to ensure that the forces of change lead in positive directions. This Assembly is itself a symbol of change in the world. Three times as large as it was 30 years ago, with quite different emphases in its work, it needs now to set its imperatives against the ideals identified in the Charter. Although the Charter was drawn up in the absence of most countries represented here, I am sure that those ideals still represent a valid framework for our endeavour. Indeed, they are constants in a sea of change. I urge our rededication to them.