

Statement

Secretary of
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Déclaration

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SPEAKING NOTES

FOR THE

HONOURABLE BARBARA McDOUGALL,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,

BEFORE THE

STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING ON

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

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Affaires extérieures et
Commerce extérieur Canada

External Affairs and
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Canada

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to address you this morning.

I want to speak today of some of the issues that are shaping the international agenda, and the stakes for Canada in those debates. In addition to reporting on the NATO Summit and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, I want to give you an overview of the questions I have discussed with many other Foreign Ministers over the past few months.

The issues before us are complex. We live in an age of contradiction, a period of high hopes and expectations -- but also an age when these hopes are shrouded in uncertainty. It is a period of turbulence at a time when we should be celebrating the achievement of stability after 45 years of Cold War. The momentous victories of the past two years are clouded by new fears and anxieties: about nuclear proliferation; the revival of narrow, nineteenth-century nationalisms; the fragility of reform in many countries; and the uncertainties of development.

In this kind of turbulence, there is not only change, but rapid, unpredictable and sometimes contradictory change. Our need to stay ahead of the curve has never been greater. We are setting foreign policy priorities, conscious that conflicting trends and unanticipated buffeting from unforeseen directions may cause mid-course corrections. The views of this Committee, and indeed of all Canadians, will be solicited and welcomed as we steer our course in the months ahead.

Haiti is a prime example of the turbulence of our times. A few short months ago, this small and impoverished country had apparently emerged from 200 years of virtually continuous dictatorship to begin to build a democracy. In late September, in a matter of hours, the democratically elected government was brutally overthrown in an attempt to roll back the clock.

Canada's reactions were quick and decisive. We have taken up this case aggressively in the Organization of American States (OAS) and in La Francophonie. We have pressed the case in bilateral talks to underscore the strength of our conviction that legitimate democratic government must be restored in Haiti.

Turning to the Soviet Union, turbulence and uncertainty are also likely to characterize developments for the next few years, with inevitable repercussions for Eastern and Central Europe. Thanks to popular determination and resistance to the abortive coup mobilized by President Yeltsin and other leaders, the people of the Soviet Union themselves will determine the political and economic shape of their country.

Whatever their future form of association, and whatever their decisions regarding linkages to Moscow, one thing is clear: the economic situation in the Soviet Union will probably get worse before it gets better. This winter could be especially difficult, with hardship and some food shortages in major Russian cities and elsewhere.

Canada is prepared to help. On September 29, the Prime Minister announced a series of important proposals and initiatives designed to alleviate short-term problems and to integrate the Soviet Union, as well as Eastern and Central Europe, into the international trade and payments system as rapidly and effectively as possible. Just two weeks ago, the Prime Minister also announced a major package of additional measures, which fulfils a pledge made by Summit countries in their meeting in London.

Our assistance to the people of the Soviet Union in their transition to democracy and a market-based economy must take into account the sensitivities of the newly freed Baltic States and the Eastern and Central European countries, who have generally moved faster and more courageously along the path of reform than has the Soviet Union itself. After 50 years of illegal de facto incorporation into the Soviet Union, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are now free to pursue their own destinies. Canadian ambassadors to the Baltics have already presented their credentials, and Canadian programs of technical assistance are in the process of development and implementation.

Addressing the pressing economic concerns of Eastern and Central Europe is one part of the European equation. Another vital part is security. The end of the Cold War and the demise of totalitarian governments have in some instances ominously rekindled ethnic, nationalistic and anti-Semitic tensions. Although Yugoslavia is the most extreme example, the pent-up forces of ethnocentric nationalism, with its potential for exclusiveness and divisiveness, are also present elsewhere.

Canada's strong advocacy of arms control and disarmament measures is an important component of our effort to ensure stability. Over the past year, our arms control activities have been anchored in the initiative launched by the Prime Minister in response to Iraq's aggression in the Gulf. Following announcement of that initiative in February, we have been pursuing action in a wide range of forums. As a direct result of Canadian efforts in the OAS, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), NATO, G-7 and the Commonwealth, we are intensively engaged in efforts to curb proliferation and arms build-ups. The UN, in response to a Canadian initiative, has just adopted a resolution

establishing a global conventional arms transfer register. We have also been active in the Biological and Toxin Weapons Review Conference, in efforts to conclude a chemical weapons convention, and in discussions to extend indefinitely the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty after 1995. At the same time, in Vienna, we are participating in the follow-up talks to the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty and in the Open Skies negotiations.

Canada has also been one of the leading forces within the CSCE to urge acceptance of mechanisms and procedures that would regulate and prevent conflict. I attended with other Foreign Ministers the CSCE meeting on human rights and democracy in Moscow, where the venue and the agenda demonstrated how these subjects are progressing and how the CSCE is evolving positively to build what German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker have called the "new Euro-Atlantic community of free nations."

With respect to Yugoslavia, I announced two weeks ago a package of immediate measures, which included trade sanctions and emergency humanitarian relief, to support the peace process and to compel the parties to end their civil war. The challenges to the international community are to obtain a definitive cessation of hostilities, kick-start a process that might lead to a negotiated solution and, in the meantime, prevent the conflict from spilling over into neighbouring countries. The Foreign Minister of the Netherlands (on behalf of the European Community) and Lord Carrington (acting in a personal capacity) all merit special commendation for their efforts to date, as does Mr. Cyrus Vance, newly appointed representative of the UN Secretary-General for Yugoslavia. I have discussed our very deep concerns with all of them.

The uncertainty endemic to Eastern and Central Europe is also characteristic of other regions. Canada, for example, condemned the recent shooting of civilians in East Timor, Indonesia, and expressed our strong concerns about the human rights situation there. I would also hope that the vigour with which the international community has expressed its concern over the repression of human rights in Burma (where the opposition leader and 1991 Nobel Peace Prize-winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, remains under house arrest) will hasten the advent of democratic government in that troubled country.

But there are reasons for optimism on other fronts. In Lebanon, for example, we are encouraged by progress towards internal reconciliation and stability. And little more than three weeks ago, I attended a signing ceremony in Paris that

marked the beginning of a definitive peace in Cambodia, a major achievement. Here, Canada is prepared to help in what promises to be one of the UN's largest and most complex operations.

In the Middle East, we have reached an historic crossroads where dialogue between parties in the region has finally begun. We can now be cautiously optimistic about the prospects for an enduring peace between Israel and her neighbours, and for a just and lasting resolution of the Palestinian question. At my meetings at the United Nations and elsewhere, I have underlined how strongly we support the United States' efforts in convening the Madrid Conference and in nurturing the direct negotiations between the parties concerned. We know that Madrid marked the beginning of what will be a long and difficult process. Canada is prepared to do its share in the multilateral negotiations that will begin shortly.

In South Africa, the direction of reform is also positive. In view of the need to give credit for progress achieved, and to sustain the pressure for further change, the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers, which I have the honour to chair, agreed to recommend to Commonwealth Heads of Government key changes to our sanctions policies. While maintaining economic sanctions and measures in support of the UN arms embargo, we have now lifted people-to-people sanctions, including restrictions on official contacts, parliamentary missions and diplomatic accreditation. Lifting these sanctions will permit Canadians to renew ties of family and friendship with South Africa and encourage the development of stronger links in the cultural, academic and scientific fields to assist in building a strong, just and viable post-apartheid South Africa.

Canada's policy on South Africa is a good example of the constant need for sensitivity and judgment in trying to achieve the right balance. Each case is different, even given the consistency and the context of Canadian objectives.

I attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Harare and represented the Prime Minister at some of the executive sessions. In the final analysis, CHOGM focused on two major issues: South Africa, on which I reported as chair of the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers; and human rights, which is now imprinted indelibly upon Commonwealth leaders as one of the underlying principles for the Commonwealth in the 1990s. The Prime Minister was instrumental in sending a clear signal to countries with questionable human rights records that Canada will increasingly take into account in its allocation of

international development assistance respect for fundamental human rights.

The Prime Minister and I also attended the NATO Summit in Rome earlier this month, and we participated in the far-reaching decisions to reaffirm the integrity of the Alliance at a time of dramatic change in Europe. A new strategic concept will be the basis for future planning, placing greater emphasis on dialogue and co-operation and involving force structures that will be much smaller, more flexible and more mobile than those mandated by the previous strategy. NATO also agreed to institutionalize its political relations with former adversaries. On December 20 I will attend the first meeting of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council, the new forum for NATO Foreign Ministers to discuss security issues with their counterparts from the former Warsaw Pact, including the three Baltic republics. This forum will associate the new democracies more closely with NATO, as visualized in the Prime Minister's Stanford speech.

The Gulf war, the crisis in Yugoslavia and recent events in Haiti, East Timor and Zaire all point to the need for stability and security, as well as greater respect for human rights within a more democratic framework. Canada is at the cutting edge of defining new co-operative security arrangements. We are also endeavouring to promote regional discussions and regional structures in several different parts of the world, all supportive of broader, rule-based multilateral systems.

We are focusing now on a strengthened United Nations, in which the Security Council can play the rightful role envisioned in the Charter almost 50 years ago. Canada continues to contribute, through the UN, to the resolution of regional disputes, such as the Western Sahara. But the role of the UN must and will become much more demanding and complex in years ahead, as it tackles questions as seemingly intractable as environment and development, a reinvigorated disaster assistance mandate for the Secretary-General, and reinforcement of the organization's mandate in the area of human rights. Our long-standing support of the UN has given us a unique opportunity to lead in shaping the organization's mandate for the next decade.

It is a time for vision and creativity. A key challenge for Canada will be ensuring that the momentum of favourable development is encouraged through better multilateral co-operation. The multilateral agenda is active and highly charged. The efforts of the Security Council throughout the Gulf conflict have shown how the United Nations can achieve results when it is united in purpose. With respect to Iraq,

Canada will provide the strongest possible support for the achievement of UN objectives, both to enforce Iraqi compliance with all of the requirements set by the Security Council Resolutions and to facilitate the implementation of the UN humanitarian program in Iraq.

In a new world order, where borders are shrinking and old maxims are falling by the wayside, the domestic and international agendas are becoming increasingly inseparable. The environment is becoming a critical international issue, and expectations are rising. Next year, in Rio de Janeiro, the UN will hold its conference on environment and development. This is an unparalleled challenge and opportunity for the international community to move co-operation to a qualitatively new level. We have high hopes that environmental concerns can be meshed more fully with development efforts and that sustainable development can assume its rightful place on the global agenda.

In turbulent times, Canada's foreign policy is anchored by political and economic relationships essential to our prosperity as an exporting nation, foremost with the United States, the Pacific and the European Community. The constructive role we play abroad, projecting Canadian values and perceptions, is derived in large measure from these strong economic links. The policies we have in place, including the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, the Canada-Japan Forum 2000 group and the Transatlantic Declaration, are intended to bolster co-operation and build on already solid foundations. If, on a bilateral basis, these interests are furthered by trade, financial and investment ties, on the multilateral side we increasingly utilize our economic weight and further our economic objectives through participation in the G-7 process, the G-24, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and other international economic institutions.

One of the building blocks of our foreign policy is the system of values on which Canada has been built. It now has an increasingly important resonance in an emerging, vital international consensus, which recognizes the importance of democracy, human rights and good governance as agents of positive change. These are values that we have traditionally espoused nationally and that Canadians want to see -- and will see -- advanced in Canada's international relations.

Turbulence means unpredictability and the occasional surprise. It involves making broad strategic choices in foreign policy and tailoring specific actions in a principled but pragmatic manner to the opportunities that

arise and the conditions that obtain at any given moment. It means confronting new and more difficult policy decisions. Peace-making is harder than peace-keeping. Abandoning the principle of non-intervention in favour of a more intrusive concept of human rights is harder than relying on old slogans. These are the types of hard choices and new decisions that Canada must confront and that will mark an international order in the process of fundamental change.

I have given considerable thought to the interests and values that Canada should be advancing over the coming months, in light of the highly charged international agenda. These are issues that are discussed in a paper currently in the process of finalization in my Department, which I will send to each of you shortly. This paper elaborates on some of these themes and sets out a series of balanced foreign policy priorities for the coming year. It is a work plan for the government that is a type of annual update of Canada's foreign relations at a time of turbulence and change.

Canada is well positioned to face the challenges ahead. We have built a country that is respected abroad and whose views carry weight. In an extremely volatile period of history, our capacity to continue to wield influence will depend on many factors: our sensitivity to changing trends and responsiveness to the pressures of a rapidly evolving international environment and, of course, our own success at adapting the Canadian Constitution to meet the opportunities of the next century. We intend to pursue openly and assertively the issues and initiatives I have outlined this morning.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.