

Statement

Secretary of
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External Affairs



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**NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY
THE HONOURABLE BARBARA McDOUGALL,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
TO THE
PRIMROSE CLUB OF TORONTO**

**TORONTO, Ontario
September 17, 1992**

A week from today I will be in New York to make a major address to the United Nations General Assembly, a place where I am also now at home, representing all Canadians from coast to coast.

These are important sessions, where leaders from virtually every country of the world come to declare their positions on world issues, and essentially, provide a form of accountability of their actions and initiatives over the past year, as well as establishing their expectations for the future.

The reason that I am at home there is not just because of my many visits over the last year and a half, but because Canada has a home there. As a strong and respected member of the United Nations, Canada's views are given close and careful consideration, not simply because of our continuing support for United Nations-sponsored activities, but, more importantly, for the uniquely Canadian values and principles that are at the foundation of our international initiatives.

Canada holds a very special place among the nations of the world, one that is reinforced almost daily, whether in the battlefields of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the ravaged deserts of Somalia or in the diplomatic meeting places in Geneva or New York.

Our international reputation has been hard earned throughout our 125 years together as a nation. We should take pride in our past achievements, but we must also be diligent in protecting and strengthening our own domestic unity so that we can continue to be a positive force in the world for the future.

As Canadians, we have experienced the full set of highs and lows that are part and parcel of a true democracy -- the task forces and commissions and high-level meetings, the give and take and, ultimately, the compromises and consensus.

Now, the agreement reached in Charlottetown on August 28 will go to the people and, for the next 39 days, we can expect to see and hear more of the sights and sounds of democracy in action.

We have learned many important lessons in the process -- lessons that we want to share with the world.

It is one of the enormous ironies of our era that, while we continue to reduce the physical distances between individuals and nations, we are still unable to close many other fundamental distances -- between rich and poor, between developed and developing, between environmentally sensible and environmentally senseless and, most of all, between the warlike and the peaceful.

Many of us had very high hopes for this decade -- that, at long last, a century that had brought us to new levels of barbarism and inhumanity would provide us with a period of stability and tranquillity in which democracy could flourish.

The disturbing events of the past year in Bosnia-Hercegovina and other parts of the former Yugoslavia suggest that the lessons of the 20th century have gone unheeded. While survivors of the Nazi Holocaust are forced to remain vigilant to ensure that the memories of their loved ones are not forgotten or denied by those who would rewrite history, the world is confronted with many of the same elements of an all too familiar pattern a half a century later -- inhumane detention camps, ethnic cleansing, immoral political and military leadership, and an international community that often seems paralysed when faced with tragedy and horror.

At the July meeting in Helsinki of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe, I made the comparison between what is happening in the former Yugoslavia and what happened in Nazi Europe during the Second World War. Some people, at the time, suggested that my comments were exaggerated and alarmist. They turned out to be all too accurate.

In the past several weeks, a number of missions including one that included two Canadian observers have confirmed our worst fears. Thousands and thousands of people are being held in Bosnia-Hercegovina against their will, poorly housed, poorly fed, without medical care, and facing increasingly desperate conditions as winter approaches. And still the political wrangling and posturing continues, and day by day a nation dies and thousands of people die with it.

Not that the world has remained indifferent. There have been a number of initiatives undertaken to end the crisis, with Canada often in the forefront. Perhaps the most visible was our peacekeeping effort under Major-General Lewis MacKenzie to open up the airport in Sarajevo for humanitarian assistance. Canada has pledged an additional 1,200 troops to augment the forces that the United Nations deploys in the region. We have also contributed over \$25 million in humanitarian relief, and participated in both diplomatic and economic endeavours to end the terror and destruction. And, here in Canada, we have established a generous program to reunite families from the war-torn zones.

But still the fighting continues, and peace remains only a distant possibility.

People occasionally ask: "Why should we in Canada care so much about what is happening so far away?" and "Why don't we look after things in Canada first?"

At one time, these might have been reasonable questions -- it was possible to live some sort of isolated, self-sufficient life, remote from events in another hemisphere. But that time is long past. One cannot put one's head in the sand and hope that the world will go away.

Events in Moscow and Zagreb and Port-au-Prince and Mogadishu have a direct effect on the lives of Canadians in Toronto and Thunder Bay and Trois-Rivières. We can see that vividly today -- uncertainty over the future of Europe, an attack on the British pound, and the Canadian dollar comes under extreme pressure. The values and the principles that we establish for ourselves in Canada are an important determinant of the structure of our overall foreign policy in a world that would not permit us to live in isolation even if we wanted to.

Think back to just about two years ago when Saddam Hussein strode into Kuwait. If this had been dismissed as a regional skirmish, there is no telling how far he may have advanced by now. We still marvel at the courage of the Israelis who stared down the Iraqi scuds and miraculously survived that brief but brutal war.

I am proud of Canada's participation in the UN-sanctioned forces that restored some semblance of order in the region, and I am proud that my country and my government answered the call when the peace of the world was being threatened.

But there were many casualties in the Gulf War and other costly effects -- environmental damage, continuing starvation and sickness among displaced persons, and numerous local and national economies in turmoil. Overall, the Gulf War cost the nations of the world a billion dollars a day in direct costs -- or a grand total of \$65 billion!

Compare that to the costs of a major peacekeeping action, which runs in the order of a billion dollars or less. Even if we were to think only in financial terms, which we don't, peace still remains the world's best investment.

What about Somalia? How much should the world spend to end the starvation and helplessness of a country that is without government, without functioning social structures and that is controlled by bands of lawless hooligans?

What price would the world pay for a lasting peace in the Middle East? Or in Cambodia? Or in Haiti?

We do not engage in "chequebook diplomacy," but, in a time of restricted resources for all governments, the foreign policy and humanitarian challenges that we face are enormous.

The United Nations, which Canada has supported since its inception both philosophically and financially, teeters constantly on the brink of financial ruin. Some nations cannot pay; others will not pay -- not a very healthy prospect for financial survival.

At the United Nations General Assembly, Canada will keep up the pressure to reform this very vital organization and, through example and by moral suasion, will endeavour to stabilize its financial situation.

But reforming world organizations is only part of the task. We must somehow find a way to increase what Adam Smith called the "wealth of nations," because poverty, disenfranchisement and hopelessness are virtually always at the root of civil and international disruptions.

International trade is the most obvious method for creating new wealth between and within nations. Canada has rejected the shallow arguments of the trade protectionists and opted for free trade with the United States, with the United States and Mexico, and with the world community at large through a more expansive General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Despite all the nay-sayers, since the implementation of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Canada has continued to run a large and growing trade surplus with the United States. Our success in the world's most significant market has prepared us to seek new opportunities in other areas.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Mexico is really the "FTA-plus," providing more precision on certain elements of the FTA, such as rules of origin, while strengthening other important aspects, such as environmental protection, and, of course, adding an additional 86 million consumers to the marketplace.

Trade policy has always been an important element of foreign policy. A careful reading of the terms of international trade agreements provides a valuable insight into the values and standards of a country's domestic policy, whether it be with respect to culture, social programs, the environment, or its overall respect for minorities and other disadvantaged groups.

But there is also a non-trade aspect of the international "wealth of nations" that has received less attention; one that is less easy to measure but no less important in the total scheme of things. It is the valuation of a country's basic political, judicial and administrative institutions and, ultimately, its protection of individual human rights.

What is the value of advanced technology or rich stores of natural resources, if a nation's citizens are unable to speak freely, to meet peacefully, to worship according to their own beliefs, or freely question the government of the day without fear of reprisals?

The events of the past two years in the former Soviet Union and in Central and Eastern Europe have confirmed that enormous political, military and economic strength will inevitably be challenged, if basic freedoms are denied to the general population.

It is in this context that Canada is internationally strengthening its advocacy for the development of democratic principles and institutions, the establishment of fair and effective governing and judicial systems, and the broad acceptance and implementation of human rights, as the foundation for establishing peace and stability in individual countries and in the world community. This is a position that I will reinforce strongly next week before the United Nations General Assembly.

At its very essence, we will continue to promote the basic human rights of the individual that are central to our own Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We also continue to seek international commitment to the recognition of women's rights as human rights. In many countries, women are still bought, sold, beaten, mutilated and degraded. This violence, based solely on gender, must be ended permanently and without exception.

At the next level, we promote responsible and responsive democratic institutions: parliaments, courts and systems for law enforcement.

We also promote the concept of "good governance." Good governance refers to how a country operates and how a government makes choices, such as the adequacy of spending on social protection and education, or the appropriateness of allocations for defence. A free market system is essential, as is transparency in decision making and respect for the rule of law.

As the Secretary-General of the United Nations said: "There is an obvious connection between democratic practices ... and the achievement of true peace and security in any new and stable political order."

The goal of "peace and security" has remained an elusive one, and much of the discussion at the United Nations will centre on the Secretary-General's proposal called "Agenda for Peace." It is a far-ranging document, covering the full spectrum from preventive diplomacy to peacemaking, a euphemism for intervention at an early stage.

Canada and Canadians invented the concept of "peacekeeping" and we will continue to advocate its use, along with preventive diplomacy, as a means to ease regional tensions and conflicts.

By the same token, the war in the former Yugoslavia has demonstrated the limitations of highly passive techniques for conflict resolution, and we must be prepared to consider more active forms of intervention when circumstances warrant.

We must also be prepared to expand activities in "post conflict peace-building," following the example currently in place in Cambodia that includes creating conditions for nation-wide elections and other democratic activities.

But even establishing and overseeing elections is not enough to ensure that peace and freedom will prevail. Our experience in other countries in developing and maintaining the very structures, processes and attitudes that are so necessary for the survival of democracy, demonstrate over and over the virtual miracles that we, in Canada, have performed in forming and re-forming our own democratic institutions.

As George Brown said in 1865, "We are endeavouring to adjust, harmoniously, greater difficulties than have plunged other countries into all the horrors of civil war ... Have we not then great cause of thankfulness that we have found a better way for the solution of our troubles ...?"

My answer to George Brown is a resounding "YES," a "YES" that is as true in 1992 as it was in 1865.

"YES" -- we in Canada have found a better way to resolve our differences, peacefully and honourably.

Many Canadians are bored or exhausted by the many rounds of constitutional negotiations. But we cannot let this fatigue divest us of the gains that have been earned through consultation and compromise. Democracy requires a certain amount of vigilance -- and yes, individual involvement -- to ensure that the views of the people are truly reflected and represented.

That means ensuring a set of rules that not only protects the past, our proud and heroic heritage, but also leaves room for new opportunities in the future.

The Agreement reached in Charlottetown on August 28 does exactly that. I urge you to read it with an open heart and with an open mind.

Don't believe those people who suggest that voting "NO" for this reason or that reason is simply a way of sending a message to governments and politicians; that there will be another chance, a better deal.

There will be no second chances; there will be no better deals for Canada.

This is a consensus document in the best Canadian tradition; a coming together -- not without pain -- of an incredible diversity of views. This is no small achievement, and it is an illusion to think that this can happen again in our generation.

This Charlottetown agreement is fair, it is honourable, and it is inclusive.

As a Canadian -- not as a woman, or as a Torontonionian, or as a Progressive Conservative -- but as a Canadian, I will be campaigning very hard in support of the "YES" side in the referendum and I know that I can count on your support.

I know from my own 17 months as Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs that the world is watching us very carefully -- not only because they are interested in Canada's future, but because they are interested in their own future as well.

They are watching because Canada has always held a unique and privileged position in the world as an honest broker, a respected mediator, a brave peacekeeper. Canada is renowned as a country of tolerance, justice, equality, opportunity and respect for individual diversity.

If Canada fails in its efforts to renew itself, what hope is there for a country where democracy is merely an idea hidden away and stifled by a repressive regime?

On the other hand, if Canada succeeds, what positive signals are sent to the world about the possibilities for peaceful and prosperous co-existence?

Canada is a very special country. By our principles and by our actions, we have been an example to the world community. Our leaders from Lester Pearson to John Diefenbaker to Brian Mulroney have produced an enormous and unbroken record of service to the nations of the world, far beyond our relative size as a country. The reverse is also true. Should we fail and our country turn inward or break apart, what power will these fragments have to serve or to influence -- or even guard their own interests?

Over the next few months, I will be travelling across Canada to emphasize our role in the world: why the world is important to us and why a strong Canada is important to the world. These discussions will be held with so-called "ordinary" Canadians -- and I use that term with great respect -- because what we call "ordinary" in Canada, the world deems to be "extraordinary," and I want to ensure that our stature is as well-known at home as it is at international meeting places.

So, next week, I will be speaking at the UN on behalf of you and 26 million other Canadians to an audience that spans every corner of the globe.

I will tell them of the miracle that we have achieved over the past several centuries: how a proud and hardy people, in a tough and challenging land, found a recipe for living together in peace and prosperity.

The nations of the world will listen because Canada's voice is an important one. It is the voice of a country that the United Nations itself has determined to be the best country in the world in which to live.

That is a fact that all Canadians can be proud of, and one that we must protect not only for our own future as a nation, but for the development of peace, stability, prosperity and justice for all the peoples of the world.

Thank you.