



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Statement made on September 23, 1954 by the Chairman of the Canadian Delegation to the ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson.

First of all I want to congratulate you, Dr. Van Kleffens, and ourselves, on your election to the Presidency. As you yourself have said, you will not be able to exercise your office with the grace of your predecessor, but I feel certain you will follow her example in directing our meetings with efficient impartiality and a courteous firmness.

This is the ninth year in which we have come together, from all corners of the world, to discuss and try to solve international problems, in the hope, which is not often enough realized, that by doing so we may ease international tensions and promote human progress.

The United Nations, like other human institutions, is developing its own traditions, its own techniques. It has had its successes, and its failures. Perhaps a disproportionate amount of attention has been devoted to the latter, which are, indeed, not so much the failures of the United Nations as an institution, as of the peoples and governments which make up its membership.

This year many familiar faces are back again. That makes for continuity of representation which can be a source of strength to us. Also many of the same old subjects are back again, some for the third or fourth year in succession. While this can become a source of weakness to the organization, it is not necessarily so. The basic problems of international politics, arising out of political and economic insecurity, foreign domination and denial of human rights, of lust for power, of ignorance and greed, such problems have seldom been amenable to quick or easy solution.

It is therefore natural, indeed it is inevitable, that we should have a certain number of what I might call "hardy perennials" again on our agenda. But it is certainly, as I see it, not desirable to have too many of them, or have them kept there for the wrong reasons and with the wrong results.

To insist on discussing the same question seven times in seven years does not necessarily bring us seven times nearer the solution. It may take us farther away from that desirable result, and in so doing, lessen the repute and weaken the effectiveness of the United Nations. There is, I think, a danger in using this Assembly and its agenda year after year to apply pressures, without regard to circumstances, which may produce the reverse of the result which we seek;

which may, also, subsequently, produce equally unconstructive items on our agenda designed to apply counter-pressures with equally negative results.

Quite apart from this intrinsic reason for us to exercise responsibility and restraint, there is always the consideration that in a deliberative body such as this Assembly, with the whole world as our agenda, we must apply priorities, and show a sense of proportion in selecting those matters which should occupy our resources.

Since those resources, including time, are limited, it is essential, if we are to use them wisely, that we should examine the various demands which are made on them in the light of our basic purposes and against the background of the fundamental total problem of maintaining peace in the world.

It is, of course, true that our title, the United Nations, denotes at this time aspiration rather than achievement. But this, I think, does not give any ground for cynicism or despondency. That our world is deeply and dangerously divided is nothing new in history. What is new is the fatal consequence, not merely for peace, but for existence itself, if this division deteriorates into world conflict.

In a further effort to prevent such a tragedy, the scope of which is almost beyond our comprehension, those of us who are permanent members of the Disarmament Commission attempted to reach agreement this spring on agreements and safeguards which could make possible prohibition of atomic weapons and a general movement toward disarmament. It was disappointing on this occasion for us to find that the Soviet Union seemed as unwilling as ever to accept any adequate system of supervision and control, the indispensable prerequisite to progress in this field. Instead, they sought refuge in a slightly modified version of the old proposal, which they have made year after year, that every government should first agree unconditionally to prohibit the use of atomic weapons - putting reliance on each other's word. If we could have this degree of confidence in mere verbal assurances, mutual trust and confidence in the world would be so great that the need not only for disarmament agreements, but for disarmament itself, would hardly exist. The hard reality is that we have learned, through costly experience, that we cannot trust unsupported promises: hence, we have to put our trust in something else. The Soviet Union, for instance, refuses to accept our solemn assurance that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is purely defensive and will never be used for any aggressive purpose. Why, then, would they accept a mere declaration that we would never use methods of atomic warfare.

However, the meeting in London this spring was, I think, far from futile, in that a new basis was worked out, by the British, French, Americans and ourselves, on which, once good faith and a general desire for progress is shared among all concerned, a real advance could be made.

In the meantime, whatever reliance can be placed on a reciprocal capacity to blow each other up gives at best cold and limited comfort. I hope that before it is too late something better and more civilized can be found. Thermonuclear devices are too dangerous - the threat that

they pose to the very existence of life on this planet is too great - for sane men anywhere to view with equanimity their existence in a divided and frightened world.

Despite our setbacks on disarmament, there is hope that progress can be made in international co-operation for constructive uses of atomic power.

When he spoke to this Assembly last December, President Eisenhower made the significant proposal that there should be established an international agency under the aegis of the United Nations which would foster the growth of the new atomic technology for peaceful use. We in Canada believe this proposal to be very important, not only for its own merit, but because it implicitly recognizes the principles which are essential to the achievement of prosperity and the diminution of the threat of war throughout the world.

The first of these principles is that the endeavour to establish trust between nations by means of co-operative ventures aimed at the social and economic betterment of mankind should not be made conditional upon political agreements which are impossible until such mutual confidence has been achieved. Surely it is one of the first lessons of history and of the study of human nature that trust is a delicate plant of slow growth, which takes time to flower, and that conversely suspicion is a hardy weed which cannot be killed merely by chopping off its foliage. It is with this in mind that the Canadian Government has observed with very great regret the discouraging refusal of the Soviet Union to consider these United States proposals except on conditions which have been already shown to be unacceptable to the great majority of the members of the United Nations.

The second principle is that proposals for co-operation which are as important as these to all the countries of the world should be developed, in President Eisenhower's own words, "under the aegis of the United Nations." This is certainly one case in which we should not by-pass our world organization.

Canada, like the United States and other free countries principally involved with atomic energy matters, believes that even in the absence, the regrettable absence of Soviet participation, an international atomic energy agency along the lines proposed by President Eisenhower could usefully be formed by the nations willing to subscribe to its aims and support its activities. My country is in a position to make a useful contribution to this work - the work of such an agency and will be glad to do so.

Nevertheless, the Canadian Delegation is confident that the proposal to establish an international atomic energy agency will prove to be an important step in the liberation of atomic energy from its military bonds, and that as the resources of more and more nations are applied to the problem, the advance towards application of atomic energy to peaceful purposes and for the benefit of mankind will become increasingly rapid.

International co-operation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy cannot in itself remove the dangers of atomic destruction. These dangers and other dangers have, however, brought their own response, in the determination of many

governments and millions of people to use our United Nations for the purpose of avoiding the grim tragedy of global destruction, and of bringing about a better world than the one we have today.

The evolution of technological processes and developments in nuclear science have made mankind far more immediately interdependent than either public opinion or governments, in any part of the world, have yet realized. But, unfortunately, as our interdependence increases, our divisions persist. The undeniable fact is that if we do not find a means to harmonize, to reconcile them, they may destroy us all, this increases the importance of the United Nations as a centre of negotiation, of reconciliation, and of unity. By unity I do not mean the lifeless uniformity which is the ideal of totalitarianism.

If we are to do anything about these divisions, we must first recognize and try to understand them.

There is, first, the fundamental division between totalitarian and free societies. In the former, the citizen is the mere servant of the state, while, in international matters, reliance on force and aggressive expansion is a normal development, however much the words "Peace" and "co-existence" may be used to camouflage or confuse. Free societies, on the other hand, are based on the doctrine, however imperfectly realized in practice, that man has rights and duties above and beyond the states and governments which have been created by him in order to protect his freedom and security under law and justice.

Then there is the division between the self-governing and non-self-governing parts of the world. Many people often, but I think mistakenly, equate this division with that between colonial administering countries on the one hand, and the dependent territories on the other. In fact, of course, the non-self-governing part of the world is incomparably greater than this. A people who are governed by a dictator, whose power is based merely on military or police control, is not self-governing, even if the dictator happens to be of the same race, and to speak the same language as most of his subjects. The people of a puppet state, the satellite dictatorship of a totalitarian power, are non-self-governing to a greater extent than the people, for example, of a colony which is on the move, though sometimes the move may seem to be too slow, to national freedom under democratic self-government.

Then there is the distinction between the highly industrialized parts of the world, with relatively advanced material standards of living, and what are called the "under-developed" areas. Under the leadership of the United Nations we are trying to do something about this, but the process we are finding is bound to be a slow one. I hope it remains steady.

The United Nations, then, operating in a world thus deeply divided, and indeed made the more necessary precisely because of that division, represents and must try to serve men on each side of each of these divisions, without betraying or weakening the principles of its Charter in the process.

Our direction is clearly laid down: it is toward economic and social progress and away from poverty: it is toward full and free self-government and away from dictatorial regimes imposed from inside or from outside: toward the progressive realization of human rights and the dignity and worth of the individual person.

Our organization has, I think, had significant success in dealing with each of these three main lines of division in our world. But in each, there are problems and trends which cause concern, and which if they got out of hand could easily lead to grave setbacks.

On the road toward self-government, for instance, and we sometimes forget this, giant strides have been taken under United Nations auspices, and hundreds of millions of people in Asia, the Pacific and Africa, have during the past eight years become self-governing. But against this, we must set the fact that some countries which formerly were self-governing democracies have fallen under foreign domination and been subjected to totalitarian and outside control. Too often, it seems to me, debates in the United Nations on questions of colonialism and self-government ignore these setbacks, and blur the balance sheet of freedom. I do not, of course, suggest that we should refrain from trying to make progress in one area, merely because no progress seems practicable in another. But we should be careful not to confuse and mislead world opinion on these vital issues of self-government and freedom.

But the most important of the United Nations tasks remains unquestionably that of keeping the peace, or perhaps of establishing peace. Though in this field, too, we have a number of achievements, there is less ground for satisfaction, or even for confidence that the passage of time is necessarily bringing us closer to our goal. There is far more reason for anxiety than complacency.

The United Nations has, I think, shown in Korea that it is capable of taking effective and successful international police action against local aggression. It must be remembered, however, that in this case one great power (and we pay tribute to it) was willing and able to give the lead and shoulder most of the burden.

Apart from the problem of possible local aggression, and the risk of it spreading through hasty or ill-considered action, there remains the danger of a major world conflict and here as I see it the primary object of our world organization must be prevention, rather than intervention.

Such a major conflict could be caused by deliberate aggression, or by accident, or miscalculation. Certainly the history of the last twenty-five years has shown that the danger of deliberate aggression, by totalitarian empires, is a real one. Such deliberate aggression can be and is being deterred by regional collective security organizations, by defensive alliances, which make it clear that the peaceful nations cannot be destroyed and absorbed one by one. In this way, such arrangements - which are aimed against aggression wherever it comes from - deter attack and serve the cause of peace. They also restore the balance in threatened areas of the world, and thereby contribute to stability and security.

Where such regional and defensive coalitions are necessary, they can readily be developed within the framework of the Charter.

Our Charter recognizes and regulates, but in no sense prevents them, providing they are organized and operate in accordance with its principles.

The United Nations itself, however, - as a universal organization - at least universal in principle - serves a more fundamental purpose in providing an efficient framework and endless opportunities for negotiation and conciliation, under a system which embraces both sides in what we call the cold war. Those who would view with equanimity any reduction in United Nations membership so that those nations whose aggressive tendencies are, with reason, feared, would be outside rather than inside our international system, have, I think, the wrong conception of the purposes and the possibilities of our organization.

Quite apart from the danger of deliberate aggression, we must recognize that in a tense and fearful world there is also the risk of accidental war, brought about by miscalculation or a misreading or misapprehension on each side of the other's intentions. So whatever the rights and wrongs of a particular situation, such mistakes, of this kind, under modern conditions, could be profoundly dangerous to the entire world. For these reasons, I know we all agree, the greatest importance should be attached to measures which can reduce international tensions, lower temperatures, and remove the barriers, whether they be psychological or physical, to communication.

In my view, nothing could be more dangerous in this divided world than a final and complete failure of man's ability to communicate with man across whatever differences of regime or race or economic conditions, across whatever curtains of fear, or iron or prejudice may exist. As I see it, one of the most vital of our purposes at the United Nations is to keep open and to develop these channels of communication, so that some day, and may it be soon, when both sides are willing, they may be used for conciliation and eventual agreement.

Mankind is only beginning to develop and use the institutions of interdependence, of which the United Nations is by far the most important. This work will not be completed in a day. But it will not be completed at all unless we keep everlastingly at the job of building; of correcting those tendencies which have already made the work more difficult and which may, if we are not careful, stop it altogether.

One such tendency, as I have already indicated, is overloading our agenda with problems some of which may be beyond the competence of this Assembly, or which can best be dealt with, in the first instance, at least, by other methods of conciliation and settlement.

The United Nations is the main highway to international co-operation and unity. If we all try to use it at once, for our own purposes, without observing sensible and responsible rules of the road, the result will certainly be confusion and may be collision. On the other hand, if the road is too often "by-passed" it will fall into disuse

and soon into disrepair and ultimately into uselessness.

We all, I feel sure, share the concern expressed by our Secretary-General in his introduction to the ninth annual report over the fact that the United Nations, with its unique facilities for negotiation and peaceful settlement, has not always been used for the purposes which it was intended to serve. You will recall that Mr. Hammarskjold said this:

"To fail to use the United Nations machinery on those matters for which governments have given to the organization a special or primary responsibility under the Charter, or to improvise other arrangements without overriding practical and political reasons - to act thus may tend to weaken the position of the organization and to reduce its influence and effectiveness, even when the ultimate purpose which it is intended to serve is a United Nations purpose."

It is important that we recognize this danger.

There are, of course, a number of factors which, in certain instances, have brought about this "by-passing". The Secretary-General reminds us of one when he says, "the organization as it exists today excludes whole states of the world and peoples from its membership". Since 1950 twenty-one states have sought admission to this world forum without success.

So long as the United Nations fails to solve this problem of membership and representation, so long will the tendency grow to seek solutions, especially those which affect these unrepresented areas, outside the organization.

Mr. President, over the nine short years in which the United Nations has existed, it has been threatened from within, and attacked from without. But with all its shortcomings it is impossible to envisage a world without the network of practice and precedent, the institutions and procedures for peace making and peace enforcement which we mean by the phrase "the United Nations". If this United Nations Organization did not exist, we should soon have to find another one.

The fact that the United Nations has lost somewhat in repute and prestige in the last few years is, I think, undeniable. This is due in part to the unrealistic expectations many persons previously held of the power of an agency, composed of sovereign states, to settle all the difficult and complex problems which have faced it; due, also to the deterioration in the international situation following the common victory in 1945; due, finally, and we should not forget this, to certain weaknesses in our organization and to the reluctance of some powers, which was increased by these weaknesses, to use the United Nations as it could and should be used for achieving the objects set out in our Charter.

The present situation is cause for anxiety, but not for despair. It is a challenge to do better, not to

lament over why we have not always succeeded.

The best way in which this present Assembly can meet this challenge is by making a good record of constructive achievement.

My Delegation hopes to make a worth-while contribution to that end.

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