



STATEMENT

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**NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY
THE HONOURABLE ANDRÉ OUELLET,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
ON CANADA'S ROLE IN PEACEKEEPING**

**OTTAWA, Ontario
September 21, 1994**

Mr. Speaker:

I want to address the House this afternoon about one of the strongest and most enduring traditions of Canadian foreign policy, our commitment to peacekeeping. Almost 40 years ago, in the midst of international crisis in the Middle East, the Canadian Foreign Minister, Lester B. Pearson, first developed the modern concept of peacekeeping. That idea defused an explosive international crisis, and led to a peaceful disengagement of warring parties under the United Nations flag.

Since the creation of the first United Nations Emergency Force in 1956, under the leadership of a Canadian, Lt.-Gen. E.L.M. Burns, there have been 26 other UN peacekeeping missions. In every case Canada has participated in some way. Canadians have served with distinction in all 16 peacekeeping operations currently under way in the UN. More than 3000 Canadians are currently deployed in eight international operations, while helping the UN Secretary-General with the planning of two other missions in which some 700 Canadians might eventually be called to serve. This is a unique record of achievement of which all Canadians should be proud.

A decade ago, the UN had only three active peacekeeping missions, involving very few troops. But the end of the Cold War, the outbreak of ethnic and nationalist conflict, the new co-operation among the members of the Security Council — these factors have changed the peacekeeping equation. The United Nations has been empowered to act where once there was stalemate. As a result, the UN is now becoming the instrument of international co-operation which was the world community's hope in 1945. The Security Council is now using peacekeeping as a central instrument to bring about peaceful change, particularly in countries ravaged by civil war.

Canada is one of the UN'S strongest supporters. Next week, at the United Nations, I will be putting forward suggestions for making the organization more responsive to a new era in which peacekeeping and related tasks will become even more central to its mandate. But we've also recognized in recent months, pending the implementation of these vital reforms, that the UN has more peacekeeping mandates than it can realistically handle, involving a variety of tasks which the international community is ill-equipped to manage.

It therefore seems a useful time to take stock of the situation, and to ask ourselves a series of questions about peacekeeping. What are Canada's national interests in the new era of peacekeeping? How should we play a role in the more diverse and demanding era which is now confronting us? How should we deploy our very valuable resources abroad at a time of fiscal constraint at home? How should we support the UN in a time of transition to new and more demanding tasks?

My view is that peacekeeping is fundamental to Canadian foreign policy. It is not simply a question of continuing a tradition for which Canadians have a deserved international reputation. It is a question of making a concrete and key contribution to international security at a time of instability in many parts of the world. It is also a question of making the UN work, in directions which are in Canadian interests and in the interests of virtually the entire global community.

In emphasizing the importance of peacekeeping, I recognize Canada's strong desire to help the UN whenever we can. But I acknowledge, at the same time, that Canada cannot be everywhere, and do everything. At a time when the UN is approaching a total of 18 operations in the field, when Canada may have, in the near future, as many as 3700 people in the field, we simply lack the resources to participate in every operation. On what basis, therefore, do we choose? How do we select the operations we support, and distinguish them from the ones to which we might, in future, not be able to contribute?

In my view, a number of factors should guide our future action.

First of all, we should devote time, attention and resources, above all, to the planning and administrative functions at the UN which will enable the UN to function effectively in the future. This means developing ideas to make the UN Secretariat more responsive to international developments, offering personnel to the UN for explicit planning functions, helping the UN plan and co-ordinate the initial phases of operations, and offering our leadership in operations, as we did in Rwanda with Maj.-Gen. Roméo Dallaire and his successor, Maj.-Gen. Guy Tousignant. This emphasis on the "front end," based on wide-ranging Canadian experience, will help to ensure that operations can function with a maximum of effectiveness.

Second, Canada should focus on roles in UN missions involving what we do best. In Rwanda this has meant communications and logistics, the supply of fresh water, and the provision of medical field hospitals. This is also what we have done with our civilian police contributions, through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, in Namibia and the former Yugoslavia. This is what we intend to do shortly in Haiti.

Third, we should try, in thinking about our roles, to offer contributions which are not only useful in the peacekeeping phase, but which also make a contribution to the broader reconstruction of society — the "peacebuilding phase" which follows a peaceful settlement. In Kigali, Canadian troops have opened the airports and helped restore vital communications functions. In Haiti, the UN will use an international force of trained police officers, under the leadership of Superintendent

Pouliot of the RCMP, to transform the Haitian police into a professional unit appropriate to a democratic society.

Lastly, I believe we should be open and responsive when needs arise quickly and when the international community requires an urgent response. This means continuing the Canadian tradition of participation whenever we can and whenever the resources are available. When peace in the Middle East has finally been achieved, Canada must be there to help in its implementation. In Haiti, Canada has a moral obligation to help in the restoration of democratic government and in the reconstruction of a devastated Haitian society.

There can be no hard and fast rules about Canadian participation. There should be no arbitrary limits to Canada's contributions. What we do in each situation must be judged in light of our interests, the requirements and our ability to participate. Resource constraints have become an obvious consideration. A decade ago, our share of the total UN costs of peacekeeping was only \$8 million. In this fiscal year, the Canadian share will be in excess of \$150 million. Other issues that need to be looked at, for example, are continuing deployments of our peacekeepers and the capacity of other countries to participate in these types of operations.

There is always value in reviewing our ongoing peacekeeping commitments in light of the conditions I have just outlined. The House knows that our future peacekeeping presence in the former Yugoslavia is up for renewal at the end of this month. As members will recall, last February the Government held a debate on the same question. Today we are continuing this tradition.

Canada has played a key role in the Balkans over the past three years. We joined the European Community Monitoring Mission in 1991, and committed forces to the UN Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia in 1992. We currently have 2000 troops serving in Croatia and Bosnia. We are continuing the humanitarian airlift into Sarajevo in co-operation with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. We have contributed funding to the investigation of violations of international humanitarian law and to the international tribunal for war crimes. We have some 45 RCMP officers deployed in the former Yugoslavia. Canadian naval forces are part of NATO's Adriatic commitment. We have participated in CSCE [Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe] investigative and monitoring missions, and we are about to support the monitoring of the border between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia.

I believe we have a moral obligation to continue to help. In the field of humanitarian assistance, the Sarajevo air bridge has proven indispensable and its work will continue. Today, I am pleased to announce, in addition to what we have pledged already,

an additional contribution of \$1 million to the International Red Cross and \$7 million to be divided among four UN Agencies, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Program, UNICEF [the UN Children's Fund] and the World Health Organization. I am also happy to announce the extension of projects with CARE Canada for the installation of water purification units in Sarajevo and with Queen's University for developing a network of rehabilitation centres for the wounded and handicapped, also in Sarajevo. Canada will also contribute half a million dollars to the special United Nations fund for the restoration of essential services in Sarajevo.

Having said that Mr. Speaker, I want the House to understand that it is increasingly difficult to sustain all of these efforts — especially at a time when the conflict still rages, when the parties are far from a peaceful settlement, and when the prospect of lifting the arms embargo may compromise the UN's mandate and endanger all peacekeeping forces in the region. The "contact group" is making a significant contribution to the negotiating process although prospects for a settlement remain far from certain. Canada fully expects to play a role in the diplomatic process commensurate with the size and importance of our peacekeeping contribution.

I believe it is possible to sustain our role in the UN Protection Force, at least in the short run. We need to give negotiations a chance to work. We need to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance while political pressure takes effect. What may prove to be necessary are adjustments in the size or disposition of Canada's contribution at a time when there are other real demands on our peacekeeping forces. Whatever changes we may need to make in the months ahead, the first priority of Canadian policy must be the conclusion of a peace agreement among the parties.

Canada is also playing a key role in the efforts of the UN and the OAS [Organization of American States] to help in the restoration of democratic government in Haiti. I think the House will share my relief at the last minute agreement reached between the U.S. negotiators led by former President Carter and members of the *de facto* military regime. We look forward to an early return of Jean-Bertrand Aristide to his rightful place as democratically elected President of Haiti.

Canada will play a prominent role in rebuilding democracy in that troubled country. As the situation permits, the Government proposes to send some 700 Canadians — 100 RCMP engaged in training and monitoring activities, and 600 members of the Canadian Forces in support and logistics roles — to help during this vital period.

Turning to the situation in Rwanda, the Canadian position has been clear from the beginning. Last May the Government called

for a special session of the UN Commission on Human Rights on Rwanda, and we were the first to offer funding for the dispatch of human rights observers. As the crisis worsened, Canada took a lead in supporting UN efforts, and provided a major contribution to UNAMIR [United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda] in support of Maj.-Gen. Roméo Dallaire. The Canadian effort to reinforce UNAMIR enabled this force to save thousands of lives, including that of the current prime minister. We were also among the first to lend tangible support to the second element of our strategy, namely, encouraging refugees to return to Rwanda. We sent a 200-person medical unit to Rwanda, and were the first to send experts' to see what could be done to restore the infrastructure of the country, its water supply, electricity and telephone services.

The crisis in Rwanda is ultimately a political crisis. It is clear that any final agreement must have the support of all parties. In the meantime, Canada's contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping effort in Rwanda will help stabilize the situation and prepare the ground for a peaceful settlement.

The Canadian Armed Forces may eventually be deployed in as many as 10 ongoing UN operations. But even with this type of global involvement, Canada will also have the flexibility to respond rapidly in the event of humanitarian tragedies elsewhere, or in the event that the conclusion of peace treaties results in a need for future monitoring activities.

In the months and years ahead, in working with the United Nations and other international organizations, Canada must retain our position of leadership on this issue. We must also retain the capabilities which will allow us to act quickly and effectively when duty calls. I believe that we can continue in this proud Canadian tradition if we exercise judgment about missions and roles. In so doing, we can strengthen the United Nations system, and help make it the foundation of international order which we will require well into the next century.

I look forward hearing the views of the House on these important issues.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.