

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

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extérieures

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NOTES FOR A SPEECH

BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOE CLARK,

TO THE 45TH SESSION OF

THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK

September 26, 1990.

Mr. President,

I would like to offer you my congratulations and profound best wishes as you assume your important duties as President of this General Assembly of the United Nations. The wisdom and the understanding you bring to this position is particularly appropriate for these historic times. I am confident you will do great honour to the legacy left by your distinguished predecessor.

Mr. President, a few days hence the leaders of over 80 countries will gather here to discuss the pressing plight of tens of millions of innocent children around the world - the horrors of hunger and disease, the debilitating consequences of illiteracy, the abomination of abuse. The Prime Minister of Canada has the honour to co-chair that World Summit for Children which will focus our attention as never before on what this Organization must still do: construct a world order which allows all nations, all peoples, all colors and creeds to live on a planet which is peaceful, prosperous, free and just.

There is an old Haida Indian saying from Western Canada: that "We do not inherit this land from our parents; we simply borrow it from our children." That idea motivates the Children's Summit as it must this Organization.

We live in uncommon times. Never before has the opportunity for this body to exercise its intended mission been greater. And never before have the risks and challenges been so daunting.

This past year has seen the tearing down of old barriers, the disintegration of walls - walls of the mind and real walls - walls we once thought permanent.

We in the West, perhaps to an extreme, used to view the world through the prism of the Cold War. That prism determined many of our priorities and guided our actions. That prism was a prison, and it has now been shattered. The consequence has been liberation. Liberation for millions in Central and Eastern Europe who now experience democracy where they only recently dreamt. Liberation for the minds of men and women who can now turn to old problems long neglected and the new problems now before us. Liberation for the world, which is now being freed from the tensions of a European balance of terror that penetrated to the farthest corner of the globe. And liberation for this Organization where the words of the United Nations Charter can cease to be distant goals and may now become descriptions of our common action.

This past year has seen progress in many regions and on many issues.

Namibia, the last colony in Africa, is now its newest democracy. We take great pride in the UN's role in assisting Namibia make its transition to independence, an effort which was truly global, involving 109 members of this Organization.

In South Africa, Nelson Mandela is free and he and President De Klerk are on the verge of beginning a process of negotiation which must build a non-racial, democratic South Africa. We applaud this progress, and look forward to the day when there is clear and irreversible change in the apartheid regime. We call upon all in South Africa to work to bring an end to the murderous violence which casts a shadow over the negotiations process.

In Cambodia, the parties to that long and bloody conflict may be on the path toward peace. Canada applauds the unanimity displayed by the Security Council when it approved last week a framework for a comprehensive political solution in that country. We hope that this will set Cambodia on the road to any early, just, lasting and peaceful settlement. Canada's support is unequivocal in that effort and we have already pledged \$1.5 million to help the UN give effect to its plans.

Elsewhere in Asia, the government of South Korea has taken a welcome initiative in beginning talks with its northern neighbour. We look forward to South Korea assuming its place as a full and active member of the Organization, as soon as possible.

In Latin America, the UN's unique experience and expertise in peacekeeping has been invaluable. The ceasefire in Nicaragua, the successful conclusion of the democratic process there, and progress in talks in El Salvador and Guatemala may finally bring hope to a region torn too long by conflict and ideology.

And in the Persian Gulf, the United Nations is acting as it has not been able to for decades. It is acting to bring the authority of the international community to bear on a country which has grossly and clearly contravened the UN Charter's prohibition on aggression and the solemn undertakings of all UN members to settle disputes by pacific means.

The ability of the Security Council to act in concert is testimony to the new era of co-operation now open to us. It is also a warning to Iraq that the UN will not relent until it has withdrawn from Kuwait and restored independence to that small country.

But we need more than resolutions. All members of the UN should ensure the effectiveness of the measures agreed to date and use whatever diplomatic resources are available to persuade Iraq to withdraw.

Iraq's aggression is a litmus test for what the United Nations can now become. If we succeed here, the United Nations will send a clear and unambiguous signal to others that the world is now different. That it will not tolerate aggression and that international law is to be obeyed and not ignored.

Mr. President, now is not a time for complacency. That we are succeeding in some parts of the world means we have yet to succeed in others. That we have solved some problems means there are many yet to solve.

In Lebanon, a grave situation continues, and while we take heart from constitutional progress made in the past year, all members of the international community - collectively and individually - must make efforts to restore Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In the Middle East, although the world is focused on the Gulf, the continuing Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli disputes are unresolved and threatening. A just and lasting negotiated solution based on the Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to self-determination, is more vital than ever.

In the Western Sahara, some progress has been made through the great efforts of the Secretary General to encourage dialogue directed to peace. The real difficulties persist and a settlement has yet to be reached.

And in the Horn of Africa, the cycle of conflict, poverty and starvation continues. While we can take pride in the way the UN and its agencies provided food to those in need, only a lasting political solution will end the terrible curse of famine in that region.

Around the world, the challenge is all too clear:

- unequal levels of development which perpetuate poverty and spawn conflict;
- a world population which will expand by 3.5 billion over the next three and a half decades;
- 14 million children dying each year from illness and hunger;
- a generation debilitated by drugs;
- the proliferation of weapons - chemical, nuclear and conventional;
- and an ailing environment, whose air is being poisoned, whose oceans and lakes are becoming cesspools and whose forests are being destroyed as if they were disposable.

That is not the picture of a planet of promise. It is the picture of a planet in pain.

My own country, Canada, is a place blessed by Providence. We are prosperous. We are free. We are at peace. But we too have

had to confront the need for new attitudes and new approaches to our own problems, including the situation of our aboriginal people.

Although we failed this year in finding a new constitutional accommodation for our country, I can promise the Assembly that Canada will succeed in renewing our Confederation. And we will do so with that same flexibility, imagination, tolerance and compromise which have made Canada, a nation of so many cultures, into what Barbara Ward once called "the first international country".

Mr. President, it is those same values which speak to the needs of this Organization and this world. In this new era, compromise must cease to be seen as second-best. It must become the instrument of our common cause.

In the years between the two World Wars and in the depths of the Cold War, there were debates about whether a state's interests were best pursued through unilateral action or through co-operation and compromise. That debate is now over. It is over not because one side won. It is over because the world has changed. The choice today is not between realism or idealism, unilateralism or co-operation; it is between success and failure. Co-operation is now the new realism and pragmatism is the only path to progress.

We either work together and succeed or we work separately and fail.

We need new action. But we also need new attitudes. Ideas that animate. Ideas that indicate what is no longer feasible and what is now necessary.

I believe our first challenge is to re-define the concept of security.

Security has ceased to be something to be achieved unilaterally. Security has ceased to be something to be attained through military means alone. Security has become multidimensional and it has become co-operative.

In a world where poverty and underdevelopment plague most of the planet, the developed world cannot pretend to be secure simply because it alone is prosperous. In an era of nuclear and chemical weapons, of ballistic missiles, of terrorism, of interdependent markets and economies, of diseases, the development of prosperity throughout the world is not a question of charity but of security.

That mandates continued emphasis on Official Development Assistance, on more open and freer markets, on innovative debt strategies. Those are not only economic or humanitarian actions; they are security imperatives.

In a world where the frontiers of States may be secure but the air, land and water is being poisoned, environmental action is also a fundamental security question. And in a period of burgeoning

population and rapid industrialization, where winds and water know no borders, environmental security will only be achieved through co-operation.

That mandates an approach to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development which is aggressive and innovative. It requires a realistic dialogue between the developing and developed world about environmental damage which threatens all states, rich and poor. As part of this effort, Canada will vigorously pursue the possibility of a World Forestry Convention by 1992.

A new concept of security also requires that we address more effectively the political and military tensions which persist in so many regions of the world.

While there is much to be done globally, I believe that a new focus on regional approaches to security is more necessary and more promising than ever. It is more necessary both because of the consequences of conflict arising from interdependence and because of the destructive nature of modern weapons. And it is more promising because the absence of East-West tension now frees countries and regions to pursue solutions to local problems on local terms.

Security is more than the absence of war; it is the presence of peace. That requires a shared sense on each side that the survival of the other is in its best interest. This means building trust and confidence.

Canada believes that a regional approach to confidence-building has much to offer. That approach can involve a variety of measures: dialogue itself designed to exchange perspectives and increase understanding; greater transparency in terms of military capacity; agreements to inform other members in the region of activities they might consider threatening in the absence of warning; and, eventually, institutions and processes of conflict resolution and crisis prevention.

Confidence-building is not a blueprint or a grand solution. It does not prejudge outcomes or impose solutions. It is not rigid. It is what this Organization has always done best. It is step-by-step. It is functional. It is flexible.

The success of such an approach in Europe is undeniable. Obviously specific measures taken in Europe may not apply to other regions. Those regions will require approaches tailored to their nature and requirements. But the fundamental principles of confidence-building apply.

It is for this reason that in addition to proposing new initiatives for the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Canada has suggested that the countries of the North Pacific region may benefit from similar approaches to confidence-building. Those might include advance notification of military

manoeuvres, an Open Skies regime, and military data exchanges. Other regions of the world -- the Middle East, Latin America -- might also benefit from a regional approach to confidence-building.

One of the key elements of confidence-building is verification. Verification provides proof. And proof triggers trust. That is why Canada co-sponsored the resolution passed by the General Assembly calling for an Experts' Study on Verification to be conducted by the Secretary General. A Canadian chaired this study and we will take the lead at this Assembly in proposing a Resolution which will call on the UN to:

- promote increased dialogue between diplomats and experts on verification issues;
- establish a UN data bank of verification research material;
- support and expand where appropriate the powers of the Secretary General to engage in fact-finding missions as they relate to the possible violation of existing arms control agreements.

Mr. President, there is one persistent security problem above all others which the international community has failed to address satisfactorily. And that is the problem of proliferation - proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction and their means of delivery, as well as conventional weapons which have become so destructive.

We all recognize that arms do not cause conflicts. But we must also recognize that arms can make conflict more likely and that they make that conflict more destructive when it occurs.

The progress between the superpowers on the reduction of their stockpiles of nuclear weapons is welcome, as is the progress made to date in ensuring a successful conclusion to the conventional force reduction talks currently underway in Vienna. Those negotiations can and must succeed.

But to reduce capabilities and enhance confidence in one region and with some weapons is only part of the challenge. There is much more to be done.

In the area of nuclear proliferation, the just concluded Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, despite consensus on almost all issues, was unable to agree on a concluding document. That failure should alert us all to the dangerous prospect of unravelling of this vital international treaty. Canada believes that movement is needed on all sides. We welcome the joint American and Soviet commitment to a step-by-step approach to further restrictions on nuclear testing. We believe that commitment should be followed up immediately, with the final goal being a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing.

At the same time, we have been deeply disturbed by a tendency among some others to adopt positions which can only act to undermine the vital consensus which underlies the existing treaties on non-proliferation and nuclear testing. Clearly, compromise and forward movement is required on the part of everyone. But the pursuit of other objectives should not be allowed to threaten those existing agreements which have become so vital.

Mr. President, it is Canada's firm view that both the Non-Proliferation Treaty and a Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty are too important for international peace and security to be held hostage one to the other.

Regional nuclear arms, the threat of chemical proliferation and use has been raised starkly again by the situation in the Persian Gulf. We must move quickly to a comprehensive and global ban. We urge all parties at the Conference on Disarmament to ensure that the opportunity for a successful agreement is not lost and that agreement is reached soon. During this Assembly, Canada, along with Poland, will seek to strengthen the commitment of all Members to that end.

In addition, Mr. President, there is the very important issue of arms transfers and the arms trade. It is critical that peace in Europe not be purchased at the price of a more innovative arms bazaar elsewhere. That arms bazaar has stunted development by hijacking scarce resources. It has distorted whole economies. It has increased bloodshed.

It is important in this context that all parties to the conventional force reduction talks in Europe take steps to ensure that weapons affected by that agreement not end up as contributions to potential conflicts elsewhere in the world.

The continued proliferation of ballistic missile technology is particularly worrisome. Ballistic missiles raise the prospect of the delivery of weapons of mass destruction into the heart of enemy territory. That possibility means not only great potential suffering; it only induces regional arms races.

That is why Canada has so strongly supported the recent expansion of the membership of the Missile Technology Control Regime. This Assembly should focus on this issue and call for all members to take measures to control the export of this technology. Canada will play a leading role in this effort.

Canada also believes that it is important to make arms transfers and procurement as transparent as is prudent and practical. Transparency builds confidence and is a recognition of the obligation we all have to the common interest. That is why Canada has strongly supported the work of the UN Group of Government Experts on Arms Transfer Transparency and why we support the widest possible voluntary reporting to the UN of military expenditures, procurement and arms transfers. I am pleased to announce that, this year for the first time, Canada will be

releasing an annual report on its exports of military goods.

There is, with arms, a demand side and a supply side. Measures can be taken to restrict supplies to stabilizing and prudent levels. But demand must also be addressed, and that is why a regional approach to confidence-building is relevant to this issue too.

Finally, Mr. President, Canada believes that more can be done to ensure that the UN's unique capacity to provide peacekeeping forces for regional conflicts remains effective and efficient. I am pleased that Canada was able to help breathe new life into the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which has now provided the UN with new proposals to improve present peacekeeping activities and to plan for new ventures. However, more work and even greater commitment will be needed to ensure that the UN is provided with the capacity and the resources to mount varied, speedy and successful peacekeeping operations be they in Cambodia, Central America, the Western Sahara or in the Persian Gulf.

In particular, Canada would support a United Nations effort to secure a clear indication from all member countries of the forces and equipment they could make available in future UN peacekeeping operations. We believe that effort could include an inventory of civilian resources. This might include police forces, communications and logistics personnel and elections experts and observers which could be utilized not only to keep the peace but to prepare for peace.

Mr. President, if there is one thing which recent events make clear it is that democracy and freedom are fundamental factors in building a co-operative security structure for your new era. In Central and Eastern Europe, in Latin America, in Asia and in parts of Africa, there is a new recognition that democracy is necessary because democracy works. This is not the victory of one ideology over another. It is the victory of common sense.

Democracy allows governments to gauge and reflect the needs of their society. Democracy allows individuals to express their views and exercise their abilities. Democracy and development go hand in hand since it is the open market which feeds prosperity and leads, almost always, to democracy.

Democracy limits the conflict which inevitably results from repression. Democracy is flexible. And because it is flexible, it does not snap. Democracy, at bottom, is the politics of pragmatism and the politics of security.

It is our belief in the role of democracy in building security which led Canada to propose a Democratic Development Unit for the Organization of American States. That proposal has been accepted. It is that same belief which has led Canada to put forward human rights proposals in the CSCE which will strengthen the rule of law and the rights of minorities throughout Europe. It is the same belief which has led Canada to contribute, bilaterally and through

the Commonwealth, to democratic dialogue and preparations for constitutional talks in South Africa. That is also why Canada applauds the OAS decision in July to endorse a new charter dealing with democracy and development, financially the Conference which produced that document. And that is why we also provided election assistance this year to Haiti, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Namibia and Nicaragua.

Canada believes that there is a further role for this Organization in encouraging democratic development. Through supporting the co-operation of the various regional organizations in exchanging information and improving co-ordination, and through encouraging member states in their many recent efforts to strengthen democracy, this Assembly can act as a catalyst in re-enforcing both democracy and security.

Mr. President, as we move forward I believe there are several guidelines we can usefully adopt as we seek together to build a structure of co-operative security.

Guideline 1. Co-operative security is multidimensional. It is based on the recognition that there are many significant threats to our livelihood, our health, our development and our very existence.

Guideline 2. Co-operative security accepts that links exist between threats. It recognizes that few threats can be managed satisfactorily without also addressing others. That peace requires prosperity, that stability requires justice within and between states, that democracy development and disarmament are all related.

Guideline 3. Co-operative security is functional. It seeks to avoid blueprints and grand schemes and focuses on institutions and approaches which work and produce results.

Guideline 4. Co-operative security requires dialogue and compromise. It accepts the fundamental truth that conversation is almost always better than conflict and that conversation leading to compromise is the best way to solve problems.

Guideline 5. Co-operative security builds on the link between stability and change. It demands that we accept that order and predictability are not an alternative to change but rather its foundation, and that order in turn requires growth and flexibility if it is to endure.

Guideline 6. Co-operative security rejects blocs. Blocs perpetuate distrust. They build a tension between regions and groups which is no better than tension between states. They perpetuate a "them versus us" psychology, which may satisfy sentiment but does little to solve problems.

Guideline 7. Co-operative security rejects stale rhetoric and sterile ideology. It seems no advantage in stereotypes and much damage in the prejudice perpetuated by them. It rejects, as does Canada, such blemishes on this Organization as the odious Resolution equating Zionism with racism, passed 15 years ago by this Assembly.

Guideline 8. Co-operative security recognizes that true security is impossible without justice. It accepts that democracy within states is a force for stability and prosperity and that justice between states - whether through development assistance, debt relief or fairer and more open terms of trade - is a necessary component of a secure world.

Mr. President, today in Ottawa on Parliament Hill a statue was unveiled to Lester B. Pearson, a great Canadian leader and world statesman, a true friend of this Organization. Mr. Pearson was present at the creation of the UN. He helped build its Charter. He helped mould its mission. He played a central role in establishing the UN's great tradition of peacekeeping. There was no cause to which he was more committed than the construction of an effective United Nations system.

Out of the ashes of World War II and World War I before it, he sought to build a structure of co-operative security which would prevent Armageddon and build a world which was prosperous, free and just for all. Lester Pearson never saw the UN fulfill its intended purpose. His dream was dashed by yet another war - the Cold War.

That war is now over. The promise is renewed, and the dream is re-kindled. Yet the challenges remain more acute, more demanding than ever.

Let us do now what we have been unable to do before. Let us shake off our past failings, confront our present and in so doing build a new future. Let us behave as United Nations.