

STATEMENT DISCOURS

SECRETARY
OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS.

SECRÉTAIRE
D'ÉTAT AUX
AFFAIRES
EXTÉRIEURES.



85/52

Statement by the Right
Honourable Joe Clark,
Secretary of State for
External Affairs, to
the 40th Session of
the General Assembly of
the United Nations

NEW YORK

September 25, 1985.

Mr. President,

On behalf of Canada, I congratulate you on your election as President of this milestone session of the General Assembly. Your long career of devotion to the principles of the U.N. is recognized by this election, as well as the vitality of the democratic institutions of the Government you represent.

With other spokesmen, I join in expressing Canada's grief at the suffering caused by massive earthquakes in Mexico. Around this tragedy, we have seen arising spontaneously across national boundaries a rallying of forces to complement the Mexican Government's own extraordinary rescue operation. In times of such natural disasters, the world truly becomes a neighborhood and our people extend both our prayers and our practical help. We were pleased to join yesterday in the consensus resolution adopted in this Assembly, expressing our joint solidarity with the Mexican people.

I would be remiss as a Canadian, Mr. President, if I did not sadly recall that last week Canada and the UN lost one of our greatest soldiers and statesmen, General E.L.M. Burns. Canada was particularly proud that he was the UN's first commander of UNEF and a practical architect of peace-keeping. But General Burns was also one of Canada's most thoughtful proponents of disarmament. His contributions truly embodied the best ideals of the Charter. We mourn his passing, but in reflecting on his dedication to the high principles and purposes of the United Nations we find an example that is inspiring for the years ahead.

Mr. President,

At the age of 40, some people have what is termed a mid-life crisis. But this description does not apply to the United Nations. There may be multiple crises in the world system today, but at the age of 40, the U.N. is a long way from mid-life. In fact, viewed in the long range of history, the U.N. is still in its early years.

This perspective helps us to establish a more balanced and fairer assessment of the U.N. in this important anniversary year. Optimists would like to see the U.N. as the flowering of a world that has come together. Pessimists decry it for not having brought peace. Realists recognize that the U.N. has persisted in its global strategies for human security, despite the divisions among nations.

In its first 40 years, the U.N. has made an inestimable contribution to building a framework for a global system that responds to the technological interdependence and vulnerability of modern society. Technology has revealed the common qualities of the entire human family. Everyone wants to avoid the scourge of war. Everyone wants the opportunity for economic development. Everyone wants the guarantee of full human rights. The tackling of these common demands is the daily work of the United Nations.

If there are frailties in the U.N, and there are, if there is some ineptitude, and there is, let us this year celebrate the U.N.'s endurance and accomplishments while resolving to improve procedures.

In conflicts prevented, in disputes mediated, in the eradication of diseases, in world-wide development progress, in the saving of countless human lives, the United Nations has enriched human existence. It has done all this on a budget that is less than \$1 per year for every inhabitant of the planet.

The United Nations should not need to be defended. But it does, and I emphasize that Canada not only defends the U.N. but will work to strengthen it, and other parts of the multilateral system. This is the way toward the peace and the growth, the freedom and the justice, which the world needs.

The challenges facing the multilateral system reach beyond this institution. Questions are being raised about whether the world will work together, or whether nations will draw back to their individual devices. Whether the issue is debt or trade or culture, whether the nations are rich or poor, large or small, there is a renewal of doubt about the international system. Developing countries, again this week, at this podium, threatened to abandon an international monetary system they believe has abandoned them. Trade protectionist pressures are rampant, and dates are delayed for a new round of multilateral trade negotiations. Expenditures on arms increase; so does terrorism; so have regional conflicts.

If that continues, we will all be the victims. Certainly a country like Canada is imperilled if nations cannot agree on the rules of trade, or the relief of debt, or the control of arms. Twenty-four years ago, 12% of our gross national product was based on exports; today this figure has more than doubled. When the United Nations began, Canada was relatively unaffected by violent sectarian disputes in other countries; today we, like the world, are targets of terrorists. Forty years ago, drugs, or technology or the

economic policies of other countries had relatively little direct impact on Canada; today they can intrude directly on the life of every Canadian community. So it is with all communities, in all countries. In so small a modern world, we are exposed, inescapably, to common problems, which none of us can solve alone. Instead of retreating inward, the world must reach out, not only to celebrate an anniversary, but to cope with the inescapable reality of modern times.

I renew today the commitment that successive Canadian governments have made to the United Nations since its creation from the ashes of the Second World War. Prime Minister Mulroney reaffirmed Canada's aspirations for the U.N. personally to the Secretary-General during his official, and very welcome, visit to Canada earlier this year. Next month, the Canadian Prime Minister will join many other world leaders here to proclaim anew the value of the U.N.

This General Assembly, then, will be a time for remembering what has been accomplished over four decades: the virtual end of colonialism, the international recognition of human rights, a commitment to general and complete disarmament, a program for strengthening the financial and trading systems of the world, a Convention on the Law of the Sea, treaties on wide-ranging subjects, inroads on illiteracy, advancement of the status of women.

We are particularly pleased at the consensus that was found at Nairobi, at the Conference marking the end of the Decade for Women. Nations of the world are now agreed on a plan of action for the advancement of women over the next fifteen years. Canadians are proud of the role that our Delegation played in encouraging that consensus, and our government will be seeking ways to move ahead on the Nairobi Strategies. It goes without saying that the objectives of the Forward-Looking Strategies must be fully respected by the UN itself, in the programs it undertakes, and the appointments it makes at senior levels. Less than 6% of the major professional UN posts are currently occupied by women and it is clear that this institution itself has some considerable distance to go towards equity.

Mr. President,

This session will be a time to pursue serious reform of the procedures of the U.N. In the harsh Canadian winter, houses that slip into disrepair are eventually abandoned, precisely because they offer none of the protection they were designed to provide. This house of the United Nations must not be allowed to slip into disrepair.

And we must note that disrepair is showing. Divisive political issues intrude too often into specialized agencies. The agenda of the Assembly and its committees is overloaded regularly by ritual debates. Some rich countries refuse to pay their dues, while others threaten to reduce their share. The Secretary-General has courageously and repeatedly identified these weaknesses.

Mr. President,

Changes and reforms are central to the United Nations' existence. We must restore to this distinguished Assembly the authority given to it by the Charter. We must, accordingly, review our efforts and in a systematic fashion lay out for ourselves realizable goals and objectives. We have sent Canadians to Cyprus, the Golan and other trouble spots because we want the world system to work. What Canadians have helped secure in crisis, we intend to preserve now. Delegations will be aware that Canada with others has been working in past months to devise and carry through a pragmatic and feasible set of measures with this purpose in mind. We will continue our cooperative efforts with all interested delegations in this search which is made doubly urgent by the critical substantive issues before us, to which I now turn.

Surveying the landscape of world affairs on this 40th anniversary, we find no field is bleaker than that of arms control and disarmament. We must face the fact that not a single substantive agreement has come out of the multilateral arms control process during the first half of the Second Disarmament Decade. Not at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, not at the MBFR talks in Vienna, not at the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe.

But I have not come here to lament, rather to offer the encouragement and support of Canada in building a climate of confidence necessary for disarmament agreements. No matter the frustration, we must never give up in our determination to construct a world security system that depends on fewer, not more, arms. If more political will is necessary, then let us assert that political will, particularly as we move into 1986, which has been designated International Year of Peace.

In the complex process of arms control and disarmament, priorities must be set straight.

First, Canada believes that deep and verifiable reductions in the existing arsenals of nuclear weapons is the

highest priority. Moving to lower levels of arms while preserving the stability of the balance at each successive stage of reduction is the only practical way to make progress. Thus we give our full support to the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union now taking place in Geneva. The summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, in 55 days' time, provides an opportunity to chart a new course for the future, leading to practical steps to unlock the disarmament impasse.

Second, for Canada, the achievement of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty continues to be a fundamental and abiding objective. Our aim is to stop all nuclear testing.

Third, the early conclusion of a Chemical Weapons Treaty is now within reach in the Conference on Disarmament.

Fourth, the prevention of an arms race in outer space is now on the world agenda.

Thus, we know where we are going in arms control and disarmament measures. The Final Document of the First Special Session on Disarmament in 1978 should continue to be our guide. The remarkable consensus achieved by the world community on that occasion must again be renewed as we look towards the Third Special Session on Disarmament.

The successful review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which concluded last Saturday in Geneva, was a significant step forward. For, by consensus, the states attending the review reaffirmed the viability and vitality of this 130-nation treaty that prevents the spread of nuclear weapons while assuring the international community at large of the benefits of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The international cooperation that characterized the NPT Review shows that the multilateral process can and does contribute to strengthened world security.

Canada will continue to play an active role in all the multilateral forums and to strengthen our contribution to confidence-building. In this respect, Canada has devised a Programme of Action for the latter half of this Disarmament Decade. In this Programme, we will step up our work in improving the verification process, so necessary to ensuring compliance with negotiated treaties.

To advance work on the verification of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, we will upgrade our analytical capability in seismic research. We will improve our large seismic facility in the Canadian North. We will expand the ability to differentiate between small earthquakes and underground nuclear tests.

As part of the Programme of Action, we will develop, and make available to the U.N., practical studies on chemical weapons use along with Canadian specialists to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons.

Moreover, we will pursue a multilateral agreement to ban the possession as well as the use of all radiological weapons. I call on the United States and the Soviet Union to conclude an effectively verifiable treaty banning radiological weapons. Canada is ready to sign such a treaty immediately.

Details of the day-to-day Canadian work of building the foundation of treaties that will endure will be spelled out in the First Committee.

Also, the relationship between disarmament and development needs further constructive examination. A global military expenditure of nearly \$1 trillion -- in the face of dire poverty, famine and destitution in many places in the developing world -- is not acceptable. The Canadian people, so well represented in a widening network of non-governmental organizations, feel this discrepancy intensely. They want a world of true human security, in which there is more food and fewer weapons.

Mr. President,

Another important lesson of our 40 years' experience concerns economic growth. We now know that the well-being of everyone depends on the financial, trade and other linkages among our economies. We understand better the challenges of the global market place. And we appreciate better the critical role that developing countries play in the expansion of the world economy.

The partnership between developed and developing countries -- a partnership of shared responsibilities and commitments -- must be enhanced. Canada is very pleased that consensus agreement was reached yesterday, in the Committee to Review and Appraise the International Development Strategy, on a Statement of Agreed Conclusions. This is a significant step. It reflects the serious effort made by all concerned to express the current economic realities in common language. We believe it augurs well for our future cooperation.

Mr. President,

When we look at the problems of the developing world, no case is more poignant than the suffering of Sub-Saharan Africa. The global humanitarian response to the crisis in Africa has succeeded in saving thousands and perhaps millions

of lives, but the experience of this crisis has also identified longer-term challenges.

Relief is not enough. Action for permanent development -- in partnership with the African nations -- is essential. African governments must resolve to give a priority to the agricultural sector and to unleash the productive forces in their own societies. This effort must be matched by a real and sustained commitment by developed nations and indeed the entire international community. The African crisis will not end until the valiant efforts to relieve the tragedy of today are buttressed by a sustained commitment to building the Africa of tomorrow.

The heavy external debt, which afflicts so many countries, is another crippling burden in the developing world. Some progress has been achieved in dealing with the debt situation, thanks to cooperation among creditor governments, debtor countries, commercial banks, and international institutions. The strategy of adjustment, financing, and rescheduling has demonstrated an impressive flexibility in helping debtors. But more adaptation is needed to meet the special needs of debtor nations.

Deliberations in the UN help in fostering a better understanding of these economic problems and further the activities of various international institutions dealing with them. The IMF and the World Bank have played a key role in this regard. We should ensure that they can and will continue to do so, taking due account of the particular problems facing individual states. The strains facing the multilateral economic system and its leading institutions must be dealt with. Bilateral relations between countries on the one hand, and the multilateral system on the other, ought to be mutually complementary and reinforcing.

Similarly, protectionism, which threatens the prosperity of developed and developing countries alike, must be resisted. The industrialized countries must keep our markets open to Third World products if the developing countries are to maintain the export earnings necessary to service their external debt and to improve living standards. All of us will lose if our borders close. All therefore have an important stake in ensuring that the multilateral trading system remains open and healthy. That is why Canada has been at the forefront in calling for a new round of multilateral trade negotiations -- and why we have been working to liberalize trade and resist protectionism in many other ways.

By joining in the preparations for a new trade round now, the developing countries can be joint architects of a revitalized GATT system. Canada is anxious to work with the

developing countries to identify areas of common interest which could be pursued in the next round.

Mr. President,

Economic development is critical, but its benefits will only be fully realized and enjoyed if the member states of the UN cooperate together in a concerted plan to tackle the preeminent social and human rights issues of our day.

Illicit trafficking and abuse of narcotic and other drugs is a major social challenge on every continent.

I am pleased that the UN has set out a plan of action in this vital field. Last year, Canada joined others in co-sponsoring a resolution which set in motion the drafting of a new convention to combat the illicit drug trade. It constitutes a key element in current international efforts to deal with this social problem. The convention must aim at strengthening enforcement measures against illicit drug trafficking.

We welcome the Secretary-General's proposal for the convening of a drug conference in 1987 at the ministerial level. We commend the link it makes between initiatives needed to cut down on the supply of illicit drugs and the steps required to reduce demand. We will be working actively with other interested countries to develop a resolution to carry this idea further forward at this session.

Forty years ago, the Charter made the rights and freedoms of all persons a matter of legitimate concern to the whole international community. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights itself is nearly four decades old. Yet our work has only just begun. As the Secretary-General notes in his current report: "Massive violations of human rights continue to take place, often of tragic proportions."

We must, therefore, expand the frontiers of U.N. activities in the human rights field. This will entail completing the work on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensuring that the new Convention Against Torture is properly implemented, extending the Commission's program of Advisory Services, encouraging other countries to offer technical assistance in the human rights field, assisting the Working Group on the Disappeared. Moreover, the U.N. must continue to focus attention on the fate of prisoners of conscience, ensure that the disabled are not deprived of their basic rights, protect the special interests of indigenous populations around the world, and take steps to protect the rights of those who themselves promote human rights.

Mr. President,

I cannot fail to take note of the wide range of political confrontation and open warfare that so lamentably haunts this planet from Asia, to Central America to the Middle East. We will have ample opportunity to approach these issues as this Assembly goes about its business. In my view, however, South Africa presents a situation which challenges the world community like no other. It is the most striking example today of what can happen to a country when human rights are systematically violated and abused. It is not the only country where discrimination takes place on the basis of race; much less is it the only country to deny the great majority of citizens access to the political process.

But it is the only country where racial discrimination is a first principle of state policy. Human rights violations are written into the Constitution, and the majority are denied their political rights because of the colour of their skin. We are all cast down by the lives lost and the people injured, by the repressive measures undertaken by the authorities and by the harsh and callous pressure applied to those who campaign against Apartheid.

The pity and shame is that this rich country of enormous human and natural potential could contribute so much to the continent of which it is part. Instead, its unconscionable violation of fundamental human rights does not stop at its borders.

But the South African monolith has been shaken. Demonstrations, strikes, and acts of resistance against the regime are widespread. Economics have proven to be an engine of change. A wave of disinvestment has taken place and the exchange rate on the Rand has dropped significantly.

The message in all this is clear: 40 years after the U.N. Charter came into existence and 35 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was promulgated, change must come to South Africa, apartheid must be dismantled. Measures to make all South Africans equal within their state must be pursued to the end.

Nor can we ignore Namibia. Not only does South Africa hold this territory in gross violation of United Nations wishes and international law, and use it as a springboard for attack on its neighbours, it perpetuates its oppressive practices in that emergent land. Such contempt and continued denial of justice cannot be tolerated by the international community. The community of nations must continue to pressure South Africa to change its offensive policies.

Canada has acted steadily and deliberately to add to the pressure for change. We hope that the response of South Africa will allow economic and diplomatic relations between our two countries to continue, but that will require real progress against apartheid. We are consulting and cooperating with our friends in the Commonwealth, in the Front Line States, and elsewhere to find the most effective means to end a system which is repugnant to Canadians.

In yet another growing violation of civilized conduct, terrorism must be dealt with in more detail by the U.N. As we Canadians have learned in the past year, terrorism is a menace to which no nation is immune. At this Assembly, we shall actively seek new ways, through new international instruments if necessary, to deal effectively with this scourge. Canada, already a party to all the international air security conventions, will ratify the U.N. Convention Against the Taking of Hostages. We were heartened that the Seventh U.N. Congress on the Prevention of Crime supported the efforts of the International Civil Aviation Organization to promote universal acceptance of, and strict compliance with, international air security conventions. The international community has shown that it has the political will to act.

* * *

Finally, Mr. President, let the 40th anniversary of the United Nations be remembered as a time of a united call for the peace that will come from effective disarmament and economic development for all.

An organization that embodies the cry for peace of "we, the peoples of the United Nations" cannot be irrelevant now or 40 years from now. The gravity of the threat to global survival must be matched by the intensity of our efforts to build the conditions for lasting peace. The peoples of the United Nations have the right to expect to find their hopes fulfilled by the actions of every government that takes this podium.

We know that the challenges are huge; we will not be daunted by them. We know that the problems are infinite; we will not be intimidated by their complexity. We know that international relationships are frayed; we will not be deterred in our search for their repair.

To put it simply, Mr. President, Canada, along with all others sovereign countries of good faith, will use the United Nations to pursue indomitably, the quest for peace, security, and social justice.