

# Statement

Secretary of  
State for  
External Affairs



# Déclaration

Secrétaire d'État  
aux Affaires  
extérieures

92/58

AS DELIVERED

AN ADDRESS BY  
THE HONOURABLE BARBARA McDOUGALL,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,  
AT A SEMINAR OF THE  
CENTRE QUÉBÉCOIS DES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES  
"PEACEKEEPING AND THE LIMITS OF SOVEREIGNTY"

QUEBEC CITY, Quebec  
December 2, 1992

I wish to thank the Centre Québécois des relations internationales for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today. It is always a pleasure for me to visit the old capital and, above all, to meet the citizens of this beautiful city.

It is just as important for a Minister of External Affairs to travel across Canada as to travel abroad, for two basic reasons. First, to point out to Canadians the issues we must deal with internationally and to ensure that our actions are in keeping with the interests and values of individual Canadians. Second, it is important for Canadians to become aware of the impact of major economic trends and global policies on their everyday lives, whether in trade, human rights, the environment, or matters of peace and security.

In a recent *Journal de Montréal* article, Captain Richard Saint-Louis, a Canadian soldier, made the following statement about his mission as a Blue Beret in Yugoslavia: "Peacekeeping, being a peacekeeper, is my small contribution to humanity."

Is there anything more typically Canadian than this statement? I am sure that I will find the same attitude among the soldiers of Camp Valcartier, whom I will soon be meeting. Whether they are from Quebec, New Brunswick or British Columbia, Canada's Blue Berets represent everything that is most laudable and courageous in this country.

We are all proud of our peacekeepers. We are all proud of Canada's contribution to peacekeeping. Indeed, Canada is the only country that has participated in every peacekeeping mission organized by the United Nations since 1947.

In the past 30 years, Canada has had a far greater international influence than a country of 20 or 25 million people normally has. This influence can largely be attributed to the fact that we have combined our efforts with those of other countries through multilateral institutions. It can also be attributed to the fact that we have continually worked to settle disputes peacefully. Through the years, Canadian soldiers and civilians alike have distinguished themselves by their competence, impartiality and cool-headedness in keeping the peace in such faraway places as Kashmir, Zaire, the Middle East, Cyprus, Latin America and, more recently, Cambodia, Angola, Namibia, Yugoslavia and Somalia.

Since 1947, more than 87,000 Canadian soldiers, both men and women, have participated in dozens of missions to restore and maintain peace or to supervise truces organized by the United Nations. Since the Korean War, more than 80 Canadians have lost their lives while serving on peacekeeping forces.

While we are proud of these achievements and sacrifices, we cannot rest on our laurels. Keeping the peace is presenting us

with more and more numerous and complex challenges. Today, we face a world that is unstable, uncertain and dangerous.

One has only to consider Central and Eastern Europe, which is increasingly divided, where we deplore the brutal consequences of rampant xenophobia and nationalism, where thousands of men, women and children are victims of the vicious circle of settling scores that are sometimes centuries old, and where the international community will be called upon to assist tens and even hundreds of thousands of new refugees.

But Central and Eastern Europe is far from being the only example. Think of Africa, not just Somalia, but several other countries, including Sudan and Angola. Think of Asia, especially the unstable and uncertain situation in Cambodia.

In view of all these complex and explosive situations, it would be irresponsible, even immoral, to turn our backs and to say that we have already done our share. It would also be foolish to think that we can continue to rely on traditional approaches to intervention and peacekeeping. One thing is certain. Canada will remain faithful to the principles of collective security, good government and human rights, and multilateral co-operation.

Every Canadian benefits from the restoration and maintenance of peace for three basic reasons:

- Millions of Canadian jobs and our prosperity depend on a stable and peaceful international community where foreign trade can be conducted without interruption or obstacle, and where the rule of law exists.
- In very practical terms, foreign conflicts can spread and involve Canada and its allies. History offers us many examples of conflicts where the international community could have avoided disaster by intervening in a more timely and effective manner.
- In terms of our values as Canadians, there is nothing more important than giving every person the opportunity to develop and achieve his or her own ambitions in total peace and freedom. Peacekeeping is one of the means available to the international community to promote such conditions.

In other words, adhering to fundamental principles is in our best interests. That is the reason we support the thrust of the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled "Agenda for Peace."

In his report, the Secretary-General goes beyond traditional notions of peacekeeping. He proposes an ambitious approach that

includes preventive diplomacy, the restoration and maintenance of peace, and the establishment of conditions for lasting peace.

The Secretary-General feels, and we agree, that the international community must play a more active role and become more involved in preventing and resolving conflicts. He also emphasizes the need to determine the extent to which the United Nations can respond to the growing number of conflict management requests with its limited resources. This last issue is fundamental to international peace and security.

Think about it. In the past five years, the United Nations has organized as many peacekeeping operations as it did in the first 42 years of its existence. And Canada has contributed resources in a manner well beyond our relative size as a country.

Consider, if you will, our participation in the mission in Yugoslavia. Our contribution has included the deployment of 2,400 soldiers, the admission and integration of 13,000 refugees; humanitarian assistance; diplomatic initiatives, such as the London Conference; the deployment of dozens of Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers; the human resources assigned to the area by my department; and the sending of observers.

While not all peacekeeping missions are as ambitious as the one in Yugoslavia, the fact remains that, given the growing number of requests for peacekeeping missions, Canada will have to come to terms with its human and financial limitations. We will have to make appropriate decisions about where and when we must intervene.

In short, while we would like to continue to respond to appeals from the United Nations as we have always done, is it still possible for us to do so?

The agencies of the United Nations have their own resource problems. Although the UN is being asked to meet more numerous and complex challenges, the organization does not have the means to assume greater responsibilities. As much as we may wish to support the ambitious new program of action of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as outlined in the "Agenda for Peace," we cannot ignore the fact that several member countries, including the United States, are putting this program at risk by not paying their contributions.

How can the UN assume responsibility for peace and security when members, including some members of the Security Council, neglect or refuse to assume their own financial responsibilities to the organization?

I was encouraged by President Bush's recognition of the usefulness of the United Nations peacekeeping initiatives.

President-elect Clinton has already given positive indications in this regard. However, the U.S. offer of facilities for training peacekeepers falls far short of meeting the UN's most pressing needs. The most important thing now is for the United States to pay its contribution. This is one of my priorities for discussion with the new Administration.

What makes the issue of resources more urgent than ever is the changing nature of peacekeeping missions. It is no longer simply a matter of intervening between two war-worn opponents. As we see in the case of Yugoslavia and Somalia, peacekeeping operations have become multidimensional. They may involve restoration of peace, humanitarian assistance, refugee relief, reconstruction of infrastructures, electoral logistics and the participation of electoral observers, and even the establishment of legal and political systems or institutions that make it possible to avoid the emergence of conditions that lead to conflicts.

In light of this new reality, it is perhaps more important than ever to review our traditional criteria for taking part in peacekeeping missions.

When I say that we must review our traditional criteria, I am not questioning the decisions that we have already made. Some people, including Mr. Axworthy, the Spokesperson for the Liberal Party, seem to suggest that our decisions regarding Yugoslavia and Somalia were made rashly and irresponsibly.

Nothing is more false or misleading. On the contrary, these decisions were made as a result of a detailed and systematic assessment.

We are not in Yugoslavia by accident. We are there because peace and security in Europe are essential to peace and security in Canada. We cannot overestimate what Europe means to Canada in terms of our political, economic and even environmental interests.

We are in Yugoslavia because our armed forces have assured us that they have the means to participate and the necessary expertise to make an important and constructive contribution. We are there because thousands of Canadians have urged us to help the UN in its efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the victims of this terrible conflict. After all, the continued promotion of international peace and security is at the heart of our foreign policy.

Of what value are our declarations or positions taken in the UN and other international organizations such as the CSCE if we are not prepared to back up our words with concrete actions for the sake of peace and security?

The decision to send thousands of Canadian soldiers to Yugoslavia was not taken lightly. Our government and our armed forces are well aware of the risk of injury and loss of life. We are well aware of the serious responsibilities and the possible consequences of such a decision. That is why our soldiers take intensive training and why we examine every aspect of this kind of mission before agreeing to undertake it.

That is why I find regrettable recent statements made by the Liberal Party Spokesperson. They just do not reflect the reality of what is happening around the world. The questions are too complex, too serious and affect too many lives for Mr. Axworthy to try to exploit them for some kind of partisan gain.

All the decisions concerning participation in peacekeeping missions, whether in Yugoslavia or elsewhere, are based on very specific criteria, namely:

- whether a threat to peace and security exists;
- whether a process for a political settlement exists;
- whether the participants in the conflict have agreed to peacekeeping and to the presence of Canadians;
- whether a clear mandate has been established by the UN or another multilateral body; and
- whether reliable financing exists.

These criteria have always served us well, but it may be necessary to add some new ones in the future because of the more demanding nature and the growing number of peacekeeping missions. Before taking part in future UN missions, we may have to consider factors such as the costs, risks, and potential duration of individual missions, and our own historic, political, and economic interests in the region of conflict, as well as our bilateral and multilateral commitments.

We also need to take a fresh look at the traditional approach to peacekeeping, which originated during the Cold War era, in order to find an approach better suited to our times.

Let us consider the situation in Cyprus. Concerning the UN intervention there, a recent article in the British magazine *The Economist* ironically remarks that "Temporary measures often have the annoying habit of becoming permanent ones."

We have been keeping the peace in Cyprus, along the lines of the traditional model, since 1964 -- almost 30 years of standing between the two ethnic communities. Although we have succeeded in preventing violence between the two communities, can we really

say "mission accomplished" after so many years of serving there? A whole generation thinks that the presence of peacekeepers is normal.

More importantly, when we consider the lack of any real change in Cyprus, is it not time to do some real soul-searching?

When I was in Cyprus, I made it clear that Canada would review its commitment of peacekeepers. This issue is still under active review. Our soldiers have brought a measure of order and a kind of peace, but surely this approach is inadequate. Until we begin dealing with the fundamental causes of conflicts, we will succeed only in creating an illusion of peace.

Finding new ways of resolving conflicts is only one of the new challenges facing the modern definition of peacekeeping. Another complicating factor is the fact that international intervention often spills over into areas normally considered off limits for reasons of national sovereignty.

Tension and conflict often arise from human rights violations, the persecution of minorities or political repression, which may be accompanied by economic deprivation. Too often, these violations have occurred under the cover of national sovereignty.

How many men, women and children have become victims of all manner of brutality, racism and discrimination because the shield of national sovereignty was raised before the international community? Now that the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall have fallen, is it not time to respect human dignity as much as, if not more than national sovereignty?

Now that we recognize the interdependence of our economies, our environment, our markets and our culture, is it not time to recognize that our freedoms, our rights and our security are increasingly dependent on the freedoms, rights and security of the rest of the world's people? Is it also not time to realize that until the security of the individual is guaranteed, collective security is at risk as well?

In short, the era of total sovereignty is ending. Increasingly the world is realizing that the peaceful co-existence of nations is strongly influenced by the internal structure of their societies. We must therefore find new ways of transcending borders, which themselves are often causes of internal conflict.

One of the measures, adopted at the request of the Secretary-General, is the strengthening of regional organizations in order to support the United Nations. The London Conference clearly illustrates the way in which regional organizations, such as NATO and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), can work with the United Nations to increase its effectiveness.

We in Canada are well placed to participate in this kind of co-operation, since we are members of several key regional organizations, such as the CSCE, the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and the Organization of American States (OAS). We also have excellent relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

All these organizations deal with similar subjects. They include, among others, democratization, respect for human rights, sound management of government, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Dialogue within these organizations can contribute significantly towards the building of confidence and the easing of tensions.

Although modest, the record is positive. For example, last summer, security in the Asia-Pacific region was, for the first time, on the agenda of the meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Manila. And in the OAS, the member countries will be looking for ways of enhancing security in the hemisphere, and will deal with subjects such as the proliferation of nuclear and conventional weapons.

All this to say that as we near the turn of the century, the human condition, human rights, peace and security are no longer the exclusive domain of nation states -- they are now a concern of the international community as well. This philosophy is also increasingly evident in the actions of non-governmental organizations such as Doctors without Borders. This is one reason why the promotion of good government and of human rights is a priority of Canadian foreign policy.

We are not trying to impose our own political or legal system on others, but rather to promote universal values, as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations. Why? Because when such values are respected, it gives the people of any country peaceful options and peaceful remedies.

In short, it guarantees the force of law rather than the law of force. These values are especially important given the great changes now taking place in the international order and the centres of economic and political power. They must be our guiding principles as we navigate the troubled waters of this century's last few years.

In our time, there are more questions than answers in the book on foreign policy. For example: What price are we prepared to pay to ensure international peace and security in the world and to promote universal values?

In our efforts to promote good government and human rights, and to improve our environment, how will we reconcile universal values with national sovereignty?

In seeking to make the United Nations more effective as an instrument of peace and social and economic progress, to what extent are we prepared to commit our human and financial resources and to take up our international responsibilities?

One thing is certain. Canada does not have the means or the power to settle every dispute, to correct every injustice or to feed all the world's starving, but we must remain faithful to the values that have inspired our foreign policy, namely:

- the promotion and protection of fundamental individual human rights;
- the development of democratic values and institutions;
- the establishment of "good government," that is, responsible decision-making by governments, supported by responsive public administrations; and
- the dismantling of barriers to international trade, in order to expand the world's prosperity base.

We can continue to play a leading part in the world if we are well organized and willing to work with other countries. The keys to success will be co-operation and dialogue, not only internationally, but within our society. It is essential that we in government have the ideas, viewpoints and expertise of Canadians such as yourselves.

I invite you to share your ideas on the role that Canada should play in the coming years concerning peacekeeping and the promotion of universal values. I welcome your ideas with interest and with an open mind.

Thank you.