

STATEMENT DISCOURS



STATEMENT BY H.E. GÉRARD PELLETIER,
AMBASSADOR OF CANADA, EXPLAINING
THE CANADIAN VOTE ON THE GRENADA
RESOLUTION IN THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK,
NOVEMBER 2, 1983

Mr. President,

The General Assembly today has been confronted with a series of events which strikes at the very heart of the United Nations Charter. We in Canada are particularly concerned over what has happened in Grenada, because like Grenada we are a part of the Western Hemisphere and, like it, we belong to the Commonwealth. We are also bound by common interests, similar institutions and shared values with those countries which sent troops to Grenada on October 25. The United States is a neighbour with whom we have a close friendship and with whom we share global commitments to peace and security.

We deeply regret the loss of life that has occurred on all sides. A significant number of Canadians was put at risk, but we are relieved that at least there were no casualties amongst them.

Mr. President, we understand the concerns of our Caribbean friends over what was seen as developments in Grenada threatening the stability of the region.

We understand, too, the concerns of the United States over the welfare and safety of its citizens in the light of events leading to October 25. This is a proper, indeed obligatory, concern of every government.

Mr. President, we have examined the principles and practices of international law as they bear on this regrettable course of events. We have, in particular, reviewed Articles 2, 33, 51 and 52 of the Charter. We are not yet convinced on the basis of the evidence available to us that the invasion of Grenada was a legitimate exercise of the right of self-defence. Nor are we satisfied that it was consistent with the principle of the prohibition of the use of force in international relations.

It follows from what I have said that there is much in the draft resolution before us that we support. We "deeply deplore" the grave events in Grenada that led to the murder of its late Prime Minister and the death of many innocent civilians. It should be obvious that, in keeping with the United Nations Charter to which we all subscribe, we must show "strictest respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity" of Grenada. If all governments and not just those who

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participated in the invasion had done so from the beginning, we would not be here today debating this tragic event.

But the resolution is incomplete. It looks largely at what has happened and does not trace out the path ahead. A country has been invaded. Its political, economic and social life has been seriously shaken. The international community has a responsibility to help repair the damage. For the people of Grenada, the first priority is the full re-establishment of constitutional government and the resumption of the economic development of their country. That must be our priority as well and should have been reflected in the resolution.

The resolution correctly requires that all foreign troops should withdraw. But the international community has a larger responsibility to the people of Grenada not to leave them to pick up the pieces alone, or without adequate assistance. The Belgian amendment was a useful addition in this regard.

Normally it might be expected that the United Nations Secretary-General would be asked to fill this gap by providing United Nations assistance to Grenada in helping in the efforts to restore sovereignty to its people and in reconstructing the country. Whether or not this proves possible, Canada, along with other members, are considering what measures the Commonwealth can take to assist Grenada through the difficult months ahead, and particularly to see what it could do to help Grenada hold free and fair elections. Such assistance would be compatible with the United Nations Charter. Indeed, if this occurs, we would ask the United Nations Secretary-General to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth in providing advice and guidance based on the United Nations' experience with such activities.

Mr. President, I have outlined Canada's position on the military intervention in Grenada. I have made it clear that, from this point on, our primary concern must be the future of a country badly bruised by the events of recent weeks. The resolution in document L-8 addressed itself in generally satisfactory form to what has happened but was deficient on many of the responsibilities and challenges that await us. We also consider that an opportunity should have been provided for us all to debate this important matter.

It was for these reasons, Mr. President, that Canada abstained on this draft resolution.