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INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS

An Address by the Honourable Paul Martin,
Secretary of State for External Affairs, at the
Fifty-Fourth Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary
Union, Ottawa, September 9, 1965.

★ Passages delivered in French

I am pleased and honoured, Mr. President, to have this opportunity to speak to delegates from so many countries taking part in the meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. May I, as a Member of the Canadian Parliament and as a Minister of the Government, add to the words of welcome already expressed by your Canadian hosts. I have been a Member of the House of Commons for 30 years and have been privileged to take part in many historic debates here and in international gatherings during that time. It gives me particular pleasure, therefore, to see colleagues from such a wide range of legislative bodies now occupying this Chamber and discussing matters of world concern.

★ I should like to greet you also in French on behalf of a country in which the two languages have equal status and in which the traditions of Britain and France mingle. Our political and cultural inheritance and our languages give us valued links with many other nations.

★ Since it is to a British and French initiative in 1889 that the Inter-Parliamentary Union owes its creation, it is particularly fitting that we should be able to welcome you in the Canadian Parliament in both English and French.

★ The Inter-Parliamentary Union, since its foundation with only nine members, has shown, by its expansion to its present figure of 75 countries, how strong the desire is among legislative bodies of the world to increase international contacts and to develop international co-operation. It has brought together the representatives of all areas of the world and of all creeds and political beliefs. They have been able to discuss the strengthening of parliamentary institutions and those great themes of peace and international co-operation which have also been debated by governments in the League of Nations and in the United Nations.

★ The Inter-Parliamentary Union has, therefore, made a contribution of the greatest value to the development of those international institutions on which the fate of all nations depends.

I should like, as the Minister responsible for External Affairs in the Canadian Government to consider with you some of the fundamental problems of world affairs today. You have been discussing such themes and I note the stress which you have laid on political goodwill, on mutual confidence and on a realization of common interest as the prerequisites for real negotiation on world issues.

There is a growing realization throughout the world that the United Nations can deal effectively with a wide range of problems involving security and economic development. Nevertheless, there remain problems of relations between the great powers which can not be dealt with in that way in the immediate future.

The division of Germany and the permanently dangerous situation with respect to Berlin are not really made better by the passage of time, even if we are grateful that sufficient restraint is shown to avoid having them become worse. The general problem of European security, relations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the division of Korea and Vietnam and the current conflict in the latter country are all examples of situations which one can view only with serious concern.

These dangers are, moreover, compounded by the inability of the powers chiefly concerned to find a mutually agreed way towards disarmament and by the fact that China has become a nuclear power while still dangerously isolated from those moderating influences which affect the thinking of many other nations.

These basic problems, which affect the security, self-confidence and well-being of all nations, are still at least partly derived from, and are certainly exacerbated by, the conflict of ideologies. I note in the reports of the 1964 meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union the point that the solution of international economic problems is impeded by the continuation of what we have come to call the "cold war".

We have advanced somewhat from the days when it appeared that the security of one system could lie only in the destruction of the other. Progress on many issues, however, which in my opinion need raise no ideological differences at all, is often impeded by irrelevant and outdated language and suspicions about the final victory of a political system. This certainly runs counter to the emphasis given by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to "objective study" of issues and equally certainly prejudices the development of that "political goodwill" without which serious negotiation cannot begin.

In spite of these basic problems that remain, there have been moderating influences at work in recent years, and we have welcomed changes in tone and even in specific matters of negotiation and contacts. A détente has been achieved and, if the phrase "peaceful coexistence" means that alterations in political systems will come about only by

persuasion and peaceful change, then further improvements in relations can be expected.

We should, however, have a clear understanding of what a phrase such as "peaceful coexistence" does mean. This is a problem about which one must speak frankly. There can be no exceptions made to what appears to be a doctrine of peaceful change simply because a particular area is under the pressure of some great power. We do not want to find that "peaceful coexistence" has yielded precedence to a doctrine of intervention expressed in the phrase "war of liberation". Our commitment to parliamentary democracy and to the procedures for peaceful international change set forth in the United Nations Charter do not permit us to interpret "peaceful coexistence" in any way other than that which I have indicated.

Surely it should be possible, even with competing political systems, to find the minimum of agreement required to deal with some vital matters of international business. Surely the international community should be able to help in situations involving bloodshed or hunger without regard to the final choice of a political system by the peoples concerned. Can we not agree that the only sane policy or diplomacy is one of peace, since the alternative is nuclear suicide?

I have, of course, been referring to the negative effects of ideological clashes. I can understand that people must take seriously the formulation of political beliefs by which their own societies are to be guided.

What we must do in this century, however, is to turn our ideological zeal to the positive task of developing those conceptions of international co-operation that will embody all that we have in common, our need of peace and of economic and social development. The longing for such new political formulations that led to the creation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the League of Nations and then the United Nations exists more strongly today than before. The United Nations Charter indicates the direction of such thinking. It is our responsibility to develop that common ideology of peace.

There have, of course, been specific developments of an encouraging nature in the course of the détente I have already mentioned. The partial test-ban agreement of 1963, the agreement on a communications link between the United States and the Soviet Union and the agreement banning the use of weapons of mass destruction in outer space had an immediate effect on the confidence with which all nations viewed the future. Bilateral relations between the two most powerful nations have developed since then and we can hope that the impetus provided by these 1963 agreements will lead to further understanding.

Canada has increased its contacts with the Soviet Union and other states in Eastern Europe, and I hope that this trend will continue. I might mention some recent contacts and exchanges, since they provide examples of steps towards developing a mutual understanding and goodwill without which there will be no serious negotiation over major issues. The visit of a Canadian Parliamentary delegation to the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia this summer and the invitations for return visits were of

some importance in opening up contacts between people in public life in the countries concerned. There has been an exchange of delegations between Canada and the Soviet Union in the field of northern development, an area of obvious common interest and in the field of scientific research.

We have welcomed the decisions of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia to participate in the World Exhibition of 1967; and there has been a mutually satisfactory agreement concerning large wheat sales to the Soviet Union. Finally, I might mention the establishment of diplomatic relations with Hungary and our interest in extending further our diplomatic representation in Eastern Europe. In the Far East, we have had limited trade and press contacts with China.

I should hope that the expansion of commercial relations between groups of countries with different economic systems and different trading interests would contribute eventually to lessening tensions. Recent history does show that co-operation among nations to overcome their difficulties and to promote the growth of their mutual trade plays a helpful part in developing better relations between them in other areas as well.

While the long-term trends are encouraging, there are some immediate and difficult problems of great concern to all nations. Perhaps the most important example is disarmament.

Canada has played an active part in the negotiations in this field to find some means of halting the further spread of nuclear weapons. Proposals to this end in the form of a draft treaty have recently been tabled in the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee in Geneva. Although these proposals have not been immediately accepted, the Canadian Government gives them its full support in the belief that they constitute an equitable basis for discussion of this vital question. Canada participated actively in the preparation of these proposals and several Canadian ideas are reflected in them.

It is our earnest hope that these proposals will receive the careful study and consideration of other governments represented at the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee. In our view, they provide a suitable basis for negotiations leading to a non-proliferation treaty embracing both the non-nuclear and nuclear powers. Canada is prepared to join with other nations in a determined effort to achieve progress with a sense of the urgency which this important issue demands.

On the question of general disarmament and of relations between the leading powers, there are two points that are worth making in relation to some recent developments. It would be quite illusory, in the first place, to expect either of the two leading parties to the negotiations to disarm unilaterally or to make agreements contrary to the interests of its partners which must always be taken into account where vital security matters are at stake.

Furthermore, we have long ago reached agreement on the general principles which should be applied to disarmament and it is time we were taking further steps towards carrying them out. Instead there is too great a tendency to try to score debating points, as if we were more concerned with propaganda than with the substance of the great issues of war and peace.

★ In reviewing disarmament negotiations, other matters at issue between the major powers or regional crises, we return to the fundamental question - how can the United Nations play the role intended for it under the Charter which all member governments accepted? There can be no real improvement in world affairs that is not manifested in some significant way in the capacity of the United Nations to maintain peace and to stimulate economic development.

★ There are those who see in recurring crises, which are too complex to be settled quickly, proof that collective security, as envisaged in the United Nations Charter, is illusory. I see in such crises evidence to support the opposite conclusion -- that, if the full weight of United Nations action as envisaged or implied by the Charter (conciliation, impartial study, co-operation in economic and social projects, all the resources of the quiet diplomacy of an international agency) had been applied at an earlier period, the crisis might never have occurred.

★ It is for this reason that we in Canada consider loyalty to the purposes of the United Nations to be one of the chief elements in our foreign policy. We do not say this only at a time of crisis or only with respect to the more dramatic political problems with which the organization deals. We are able to assist in the economic development of newly-independent countries through bilateral and multilateral aid programmes. We have thrown our full weight behind efforts to develop multilateral trade in directions beneficial to all nations. Last year we convened a conference of nations best able to assist in United Nations peace keeping to help co-ordinate the technical planning of those nations for such tasks. We have ourselves taken part in every major United Nations peace-keeping project since 1948.

★ These Canadian policies are based on the conviction that, if United Nations membership means anything, it means that middle and smaller powers have rights and obligations with respect to the search for security. If the leading powers are unable to find solutions to some problems, other nations must take whatever action is open to them in furtherance of the aims of the Charter. The participation of many middle and smaller powers in peace-keeping operations has given those nations the right to contribute to the formulation of policy on matters of major concern. The increasing involvement of all members of the organization in the rights and obligations of membership has opened up new and valuable opportunities for dealing with the most pressing of world problems.

★ The United Nation is, of course, faced with major problems at the moment. In view of the nature of the current situation in the dispute between India and Kashmir, I cannot comment extensively on this subject.

I must, however, reiterate the support of the Canadian Government for the United Nations appeal for a cease-fire. This conflict is of grave concern to us and we would help in any way possible to bring about an end to the fighting and a final settlement of the problem. As you know, our Prime Minister offered his assistance in mediation in the early stages of the conflict.

★ I should like to mention also a current problem that will come before the General Assembly when it meets later this month. I refer to the question of responsibility, financial and otherwise, for United Nations peace keeping. We are, in a way, at a crossroads in the development of the organization. The peace-keeping responsibility of the United Nations must be affirmed. Its capacity to act must be reinforced and its method of acting subjected to the most careful examination to ensure that the rights, obligations and interests of all members and the correct functioning of the various constituent parts of the organization are respected.

★ We welcome the agreement reached on September 1 that the twentieth session of the General Assembly should proceed with its normal work and that the question of the applicability of Article 19 should not be raised with respect to the costs of the peace-keeping operations in the Congo and in Gaza. The financial difficulties of the organization must now be settled through voluntary contributions. Canada is one of a number of governments that have already made such contributions, and it is our hope that other member governments will now contribute their appropriate shares. The amounts are small. Surely the price is not too high to pay in order to put our collective house in order.

★ There remain to be settled the long-range questions of responsibility for initiating and financing future peace-keeping operations and of sharing equitably the costs of the United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East. Let me outline a few principles that I believe should explain our approach to these questions.

★ First, the maximum possible sharing of the cost, preferably by collective assessment, is the fairest and politically the most effective method of financing peace keeping. It should be the first method to be considered by the Security Council when the Council decided to authorize a new operation. Other financial arrangements may have to be worked out to fit different circumstances but it is essential to the proper functioning of the organization and to the maintenance and support for it in member countries that financial responsibility for projects of wide international benefit should be shared by the international community as a whole.

★ Second, if the Security Council is unable to act because of disagreement amongst the great powers, then the General Assembly must be allowed to recommend appropriate measures that governments can act on if they so desire. I shall be the first to agree that power and responsibility are linked under the Charter. But to go on from there to maintain that a single great power should be able to frustrate the will of the majority is surely a distortion of the Charter's spirit.

★ Third, the United Nations must have the technical and military capacity to act when required. I have noted that, at your conference in 1964, you passed a resolution that refers to the necessity to organize eventually "world forces as part of an agreement for the general and complete disarmament of sovereign states". After that, the resolution goes on to make certain proposals for the advance planning of peace-keeping operations. Canada welcomes this approach. Last year, as I mentioned, we organized a meeting of representatives of a number of countries with experience in peace-keeping operations in order to exchange information and to prepare our Government better for future operations.

★ What is the peculiar value of United Nations peace-keeping operations in the broad political sense? The benefit to the area involved is, of course, obvious. The broader value is that threats to the peace that might eventually involve the great powers are brought under control before the fighting can spread. We should not rest content with this, however. The absence of conflict does not guarantee peace and security.

★ It is imperative that the United Nations develop further its capacity for mediation and conciliation to bring about a solution to the political disputes that lead to conflict. Here lies perhaps the greatest potential benefit of United Nations intervention. I say "potential" intervention advisedly, for we have made too little progress in this direction. In future, I believe, we must associate more closely the United Nations' twin tasks of peace keeping and peace building.

★ In this present difficult period in the United Nations, we are faced with some basic questions. Are we to go forward in the paths indicated by the Charter or not? The Charter is not a constitution for world government, nor can it provide all the answers to questions that must be debated and negotiated between sovereign governments. The assumption on which it is based and to which all member governments have formally subscribed seem abundantly clear, however. A commentator has referred to what he calls "an unexpressed belief that, for every crisis of world politics, there are certain adequate principles of just action not yet formulated but discoverable and that the United Nations is the agent that, by its nature and constitution, seeks to discover and to act upon these principles". Member governments cannot, if they are to be honest in maintaining their commitment, give only what this commentator describes as "calculated and ephemeral support". Their support must be consistent, wholehearted and imaginative if real progress is to be made towards the objectives set forth in the Charter.

In closing, I should like to pay tribute to the way in which the Inter-Parliamentary Union has recognized the necessity of stimulating debate on international peace and co-operation in parliaments, and beyond them in wide public circles before governments reach their decisions. The drive to achieve collective security through permanent international institutions, which has characterized the best in political thought in this century, has been closely linked to the desire to widen the basis of public interest in foreign policy. The two ideals of democratic participation in policy making and of peace in international relations are being pursued by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on a scale that is bound to assure lasting results.

We must have confidence that progress can be made towards a lasting peace; otherwise we shall not make a great enough effort towards that good. We must use those great forces of an awakened public conscience and of enlightened public debate in the service of new projects for the betterment of humanity.

The parliaments represented here have the power, if a meeting of minds can be achieved, to solve many of the serious problems afflicting the world. That power presents us with a great responsibility and a great challenge. I hope that we can, all of us, meet the challenge and discharge the responsibility worthily.

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