

STATEMENTS
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SPEECHES



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90/14

"PEACEKEEPING AND CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY"

Notes for a speech by
the Right Honourable Joe Clark,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
at the Annual Meeting of the
Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament

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Affaires extérieures et
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External Affairs and
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Canada

At the outset, I would like to offer my congratulations to the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament for the project we are here to help launch tonight. The Centre is one of only three institutions chosen from dozens by the Ford Foundation to study the future of peacekeeping. That in itself is an achievement, and it is testimony to hard work, and the good reputation the Centre has built up since its foundation. It will be no surprise to people in this room that there have been occasions on which the Centre and the Government have disagreed. But that is as it should be. The Centre has helped bring to discussion in Canada an expertise and dispassion which have been all too lacking in the past. It has helped inform Canadians. It has stimulated debate. It has proposed alternatives. And all that is not only desirable, but vital, in a democracy dedicated to delivering a foreign policy that secures Canada's interests in the world.

I have been asked to talk today about peacekeeping and about Canadian foreign policy. I will also talk about the Persian Gulf. Those may sound like three topics. They are not. Those three issues are closely connected.

In recent weeks, there have been attempts to draw distinctions between what Canada is doing in the Gulf and what we have done over the years as peacekeepers, or indeed between our presence there and the fundamental principles of Canadian foreign policy. Those are false distinctions.

Peacekeeping is building international order. What we are doing in the Gulf is seeking to keep and build international order. And that is the most fundamental purpose of Canadian foreign policy.

It has become a truism that, with the Cold War over, a new era of international co-operation has begun, that the old ways are over. To a degree we should not underestimate, what is happening in the Gulf will determine whether or not that truism is true. For what is happening there is a contest between old ways and new.

The old ways are what started this crisis: the idea that strong nations can invade weak ones without provocation; the idea that aggression will be rewarded and that punishment can be avoided; the idea that might is right, that the Charter of the United Nations is to be ignored, not obeyed.

But there are hopeful signs in how the world has responded to those old ways. Ten United Nations Security Council resolutions have passed with unprecedented consensus since August 2nd. There has been a near universal application of, and adherence to, sanctions against Iraq. The military forces which have gathered in the Gulf region are from 25 very different countries -- Arab and non-Arab, Muslim and non-Muslim, countries from East and West, North and South.

Canadians are a peaceful people. We don't want war in the Gulf. If this crisis can be resolved without conflict, nothing would be more welcome. The world has had enough of wars. We don't need more war graves, or war heroes, or war victims.

Kuwait today is a victim of war -- a new victim. One hundred days ago, it was at peace, negotiating differences with its neighbour Iraq. Then Iraq abandoned negotiations, despatched its troops, broke basic international law, denied foreigners the right to leave (and now uses them as bargaining chips), and began the deliberate sacking of Kuwait. This crisis started with an act of war. Our hope and purpose is to have it end peacefully. But simply talking to Saddam Hussein will not persuade him. Had talk been our only response, Iraqi forces would almost certainly have moved beyond Kuwait, into Saudi Arabia, creating more new victims of war.

The troops of 25 nations, and the sanctions of the UN, give a chance for talk, for diplomacy, for peace. And those instruments of peace have been developed and employed with unprecedented skill and effect, not least by Canada. But those efforts have weight because they are backed by the threat of force, and that threat will persuade Saddam Hussein only if he believes it will be used.

That is the harsh reality for people who are serious about peace in the Gulf. If we send troops, and refuse in advance to use them, Saddam Hussein has no reason to seek peace.

By its nature, diplomacy is not dramatic. But the modern media focus on the dramatic. Most Canadians have no idea about the history that has been made in the Security Council in the last three months, but their hearts are tugged by the testimony of anxious Canadians who want their families home. And if Messrs. Heath, Brandt, Nakasone, Waldheim, and other lesser figures are received by Saddam Hussein, television audiences may forget about the act of war which started this crisis, and the breach of international law which denies foreigners the right to leave freely.

Canada is doing everything possible to ensure that the international community proceeds under UN authority. Saddam Hussein must understand that we will not reward his act of war. To keep the peace, we must keep the pressure, and Saddam Hussein must know that the coalition against Iraq's aggression will not fade or falter.

Our diplomatic efforts continue, across a wide range. For my part, I am travelling next week to meetings of the CSCE (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe), but am also making short working visits to Prague, Moscow, Turkey, Jordan and Israel, and I hope to see, among others, Yevgenny Primakov, King Hussein, Israeli Ministers, and Palestinians.

Peace is not accidental; it must be constructed and it must be maintained, but peace sometimes has a price. If, in this new era of international co-operation which we now claim exists, Iraq is allowed to shatter that order and shatter that peace without sanction, what message would that send, what *carte blanche* would that give?

And if we succeed in the Gulf, what a signal that would be, what a warning that war will not work -- what a sign of hope for the future. What is at stake in the Gulf is not territory or oil but the very foundation of the peace we all talk about, of the order we know is essential.

Some Canadians wish we were not in the Gulf. In one sense, we all share that sentiment. I wish Iraq had not invaded Kuwait. I wish the peace had been kept. But responsible nations must deal with facts, not wishes. The peace was not kept. Iraq did invade Kuwait. And Canada, with so many others, is there now to help seek peace and defend order, as we have done in the past, as is our duty and our obligation.

What we are doing in the Gulf is different from what we did in Namibia, or Central America. We are not used to sending ships and soldiers to places where conflict threatens. We are used to our soldiers putting on blue helmets and going places when ceasefires have been declared, where what we do is patrol a truce, not prevent a war. But the peacekeeping we have come to expect was once new too. When Lester Pearson designed the UN force which helped end the Suez crisis, there were people in this country who opposed what Canada did. They thought it was not our business. They worried about offending Britain and France. They were wrong then. A great UN tradition was born and an honourable Canadian commitment was made.

Since the end of the Second World War, Canada has participated in 20 international peacekeeping missions. Eighty-three thousand Canadian soldiers have served with those missions. In the last year alone, we have joined in four of the

five UN initiatives that have been mounted with such unprecedented success. Over 1,000 Canadian women and men are serving abroad today -- in Lebanon, in Cyprus, in Central America, in the Sinai and on the Golan Heights. And in the weeks and months ahead, there will be new peacekeeping missions, missions which may be of unprecedented scope.

It is a popular notion that peacekeeping demonstrates how the UN has worked. Indeed, peacekeeping is a success story. Yet peacekeeping was not envisaged by the founders of the United Nations. It is not even mentioned in the UN Charter. Peacekeeping was an inspired innovation, which Canadians helped to construct. But it was an innovation spawned not by a UN that had worked, but by a UN that had failed.

The UN was put in place so the Great Powers would act together to deter war and to fight it if it occurred. As the UN was consumed by another war -- the Cold War -- the divisions of that war became divisions in the Security Council. And the Security Council was unable to act.

In conflicts where the vital interests of the Permanent Members were at stake, the UN was kept out. But in other situations, where the Great Powers decided conflict should be controlled without their direct involvement, peacekeeping was allowed. But it was allowed to function in a tightly controlled way. The principles that have governed peacekeeping for many years -- the consent principle, the idea of the use of force only in self-defence, the absence of the Great Powers from the forces on the ground -- these principles were very different from the principles embodied in the collective security sections of the UN Charter. The Charter envisioned Great Power involvement. It envisioned the use of force. It envisioned the UN acting as a policeman. So the principles of peacekeeping did not, in fact, reflect what the Charter said. It was a concept put together because the Charter did not work.

For some countries, peacekeeping was a threat to Great Power influence. But for Canada, peacekeeping was a natural avocation. It did not threaten our empire because we did not have one. And the Canadian qualities of fairness and skill made us valued members of peacekeeping missions. Indeed, not only did peacekeeping not threaten Canada; it offered the great promise of international order collectively maintained.

Peacekeeping helps build the confidence required to let settlement occur. The means have been soldiers who can verify, who can observe, and who can separate opposing forces. And while Great Powers have acted in the past to constrain it, it has played a significant role in maintaining international order. Peacekeeping is both a symbol of what the UN is, and what the UN can be, if countries co-operate.

Canada has always been more acutely dependent on international order than most states. Other states have been able to ignore order or impose it. Those have not been choices for Canada. Our population is too small. Our land mass is too large. Our economy is too connected to others. We have needed order for our security, order for our trade, order for our prosperity. And we have needed to pursue it with others.

That reality has been with us always. It will be present even more in the future. For Canada, multilateralism in foreign policy is not an exercise in idealism; it is an exercise in realism. In one sense, for Canada, multilateral foreign policy is a question of choice. That choice is between success and failure.

Canada's commitment to peacekeeping also has roots in our own national experience. We are a country which was not created through revolution or war. But we are a country which has known the threat of conflict, a country which has had to struggle constantly to compromise, to hold together, and in so doing to become a community. For 26 million people to occupy the second largest piece of real estate in the world is uncommon. For a country which runs East-West to survive when its natural links run North-South has not been easy. And for a country composed of native people, two founding peoples, and many more cultures, simply to endure is an accomplishment.

But we have endured. We have successfully avoided civil war and revolution. Let me quote from one of the speeches in the Confederation debates of 1865: "We are endeavouring to adjust harmoniously greater difficulties than have plunged other countries into all the horrors of civil war.... We are striving to settle forever issues hardly less momentous than those that have rent the United States of America, and are now exposing it to all the horrors of civil war. Have we not then great cause of thankfulness that we have found a better way for the solution of our troubles than that which has entailed in other countries such deplorable results?"

What we have achieved -- and what we must now renew -- is unique -- a voluntary association of many traditions, many cultures. The accomplishment of Canada has been to demonstrate that diversity is not a blemish but a blessing. The lesson Canada brings to the world is that compromise is not a dirty word. John Holmes once said: "As managers of the unmanageable, I would stack Sir John A. or Mackenzie King up against Bismarck or Bolivar any day. If they aren't comparable to Lincoln it is because they made sure not to have his problem."

We have brought that experience to our approach abroad. That includes peacekeeping. The Canadian experience proves that

strife can sometimes be avoided if people talk rather than shout or shoot. Peacekeeping is designed to let people talk.

The Canadian experience proves that while there are often rights and wrongs, there are also often two sides to a story -- or even more -- and that dialogue is not the avenue of the fearful but the successful. Peacekeeping is designed to let that dialogue happen.

The Canadian experience proves that solutions often do not lie in grand schemes, but in processes that work and procedures that are practical. Peacekeeping is practical. It avoids grand schemes.

The Canadian experience proves that stability is not the opposite of change but rather its foundation. Peacekeeping provides the stability to allow change to take place.

The Canadian experience proves that while compromise may preclude total victory, it also preserves peace. Peacekeeping preserves peace and gives compromise a chance.

Canadians know what is required to keep this a peaceable kingdom. And because of that, they know that behaviour is even more necessary abroad.

Another thing Canadians know is that institutions must grow if they are to remain relevant. Peacekeeping is no exception. Peacekeeping must adapt to new opportunities and new challenges. We are at such a moment now, a moment of new challenge and opportunity.

The challenge is one of quantity and quality. In the last year alone, the United Nations has set up more peacekeeping operations than it did in its previous 20 years of existence. More will follow.

In addition, peacekeeping has become more than the parking of soldiers between armies. The UN operation in Namibia helped bring independence to the last colony in Africa. That operation involved 100 countries. It ran elections. It ran a police force. The UN became, in effect, a partner in an interim government. In Central America, the UN monitored not only a ceasefire across borders, but also monitored a ceasefire within borders. It assisted in returning refugees. It observed an election.

And in the Western Sahara and Cambodia, two likely areas of future UN activity, peacekeeping could involve thousands of soldiers and civilians, people who would run administrations, run elections, and run police forces in addition to keeping the peace.

That explosion in peacekeeping owes its origins to a sea-change in Great Power attitudes. The superpowers have discovered that the UN can be a help and not a hindrance. What before constrained peacekeeping now pushes it forward. Peacekeeping is moving towards peacemaking. Conflict control is beginning to become conflict resolution. And peacekeeping is shifting from the separation of forces to the supervision of societies.

If the growth of peacekeeping presents opportunities, it also poses practical problems. It poses problems of resources, of readiness, of expertise, and of the very authority of the UN system itself. Canada has been active in seeking new ways to make peacekeeping work better. Under Canadian chairmanship, the UN working group charged with peacekeeping matters was reconvened in 1989 to deal with substantive matters for the first time in years. Its work has provided the UN with useful, new proposals. But much more work needs to be done.

As part of that effort, Canada has made a proposal to secure a clear indication, from all member countries, of the forces and equipment they could make available in future peacekeeping operations. That effort should include an inventory of civilian resources, including police forces, communications and logistics personnel, and elections experts and observers, which could be used not only to keep the peace but to build for peace.

I also believe it is necessary to explore new means to pursue old tasks. As peacekeeping tasks expand in complexity and number, we should be looking at new technologies for peace -- high technology which will reduce manpower requirements, increase effectiveness and hopefully reduce costs. That might include satellites, aerial surveillance, and sensors deployed on frontiers. Canada is exploring those options actively.

Finally, I believe the United Nations machinery itself must reflect the new responsibilities it is taking on and the new opportunities before it. The Secretary-General must have at his disposal adequate expertise and resources to anticipate, plan and manage peacekeeping operations.

What is happening to peacekeeping mirrors what is happening to our concept of security. We used to see security as competitive, as purely military, as consisting largely of the balancing of military forces. So too, peacekeeping has tended to be narrow in focus and mandate, dedicated to keeping people apart rather than bringing them together.

But we are learning now that security must be co-operative, that the security of one side is not increased if it is purchased at the expense of the other. We are learning that security lies in building confidence, not armies and arguments.

Peacekeeping has a new role in that new notion of security. Peacekeeping in the future must anticipate as well as react. It must deal with the causes of conflict and not just their symptoms. It must build peace, and not simply keep it.

Much of Canadian foreign policy is about building peace. Verification, in which Canada is a world leader, is about building peace. Confidence-building measures, where we have taken the lead at the CSCE and where we are making modest proposals in the North Pacific, is about building peace. Official Development Assistance, designed to build prosperity and opportunity, is about building peace. Support for human rights and democratic development is about giving societies and individuals the instruments of prosperity and freedom, instruments which, when denied, cause conflict. That is about building peace. And support for more open markets -- whether at the GATT or through co-operation with our partners in Asia or through the Free Trade Agreement -- is about preventing conflict over commerce, conflict which in the past has led to wars. That, too, is about building peace.

The approach Canada has taken abroad is the approach the world needs. We are committed to that approach because we depend on an order which we cannot impose. Today that is reality for everyone. Interdependence is no longer a slogan; it is a description. Countries that are interdependent cannot pretend that they are not. And problems which are interdependent cannot be solved separately.

I started with the Gulf and I want to conclude with it. The same hopeful forces which are shaping a new future for peacekeeping are behind the world's response to the Gulf. That too is a result of the new international consensus, the new collective will, the new belief in international order. What the world is doing in the Gulf is not departing from the UN Charter. It is returning to it. Returning to the notion that peace should not only be kept, but made. Returning to the notion that the best guarantee of peace is the guarantee that war will not be accepted. That guarantee poses risks and dangers and new responsibilities. That is the responsibility of international order. It is a burden worth bearing. That is what Canadian foreign policy is all about.