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WORLD ORDER AND WORLD SECURITY

An Address by the Honourable Mitchell Sharp,
Secretary of State for External Affairs, to
the World Congress of the World Association
of World Federalists, Ottawa, August 24, 1970.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary-General, ladies and gentlemen:

It is my pleasure, personally and on behalf of the Government, to welcome the delegates and guests of this Congress to Canada. We are honoured to have you here. You are already well embarked on a very demanding program, and it is obvious that you have come here with a serious intent to further the work of your Association. At the same time, I very much hope that all of you will have an opportunity to see something of Canada, not just the beautiful surroundings of the capital, but something of Canada's infinite variety of scenery, of culture and of spirit.

I don't have to tell you that Canada is a federal country where jurisdiction is shared between the Federal Government and the governments of the provinces. A hundred years ago, when our constitution was written, government played a relatively small role in the lives of the people and, at least from the perspective of today, it appears that the system worked without great difficulty. The complexity of life in a modern industrial state has raised jurisdictional problems of great magnitude and we have had to learn how to proceed by agreement; we have had to develop new techniques to conduct the national business effectively.

Canada is composed of two great language groups, English and French, and of a multitude of cultures, both indigenous and brought from every nation on earth. The one-third of our people who are French-speaking are much more than a large minority in Canada, they constitute the largest and most significant French community outside metropolitan France and they are an integral part of the mainstream of French culture.

Canada divides into a number of distinct geographical areas: the Atlantic Provinces, the St. Lawrence Valley and the Great Lakes basin, the Prairies, the Pacific coast and the Arctic North. These regions complement one another; they compete with one another, and at times their interests come into conflict.

I say all this not so much to give you a sort of primer of the facts of modern Canada as to suggest that in Canada, in microcosm, we are working day by day with the same problems that the world faces on a global basis. I believe that the experience of federal countries such as Canada is vitally important in working out solutions to the problems of world order.

This is not to suggest that in Canada all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. We are still constantly searching, experimenting and learning. We are learning how two great cultures can live together in equality, freedom and harmony while preserving the cultural heritage of those belonging to neither. We are learning how our indigenous peoples, the Indians and the Eskimo, can enjoy the benefits of modern society while retaining their own integrity. We are learning how to overcome the pockets of chronic under-employment that result from our geographical and climatic disparities. And all the time we are striving to improve our constitutional system so that governments can share jurisdiction, not in the narrow interests of political groups but in the wider interests of all our people.

Speaking in Washington last year, the Prime Minister said that for Canada, living next door to the United States was like sleeping with an elephant -- however good-natured the beast may be, every twist and grunt affects you. The central problem Canada faces is how to live distinct from but in harmony with an immensely powerful neighbour. It seems to me that here too there are lessons to be learned from Canada's experience. In your work it must surely be your aim to find the set of circumstances that will yield a maximum of world order and security while protecting and preserving the essential spirit and culture of all the world's peoples. Cultural homogeneity, even if it were possible to contemplate, suggests no more than cultural stultification, cultural stagnation and cultural sterility.

In the course of a lecture in Montreal some years ago, Barbara Ward put forward a rather startling suggestion. She said that Canada had the opportunity to become "the first international nation". The phrase is paradoxical, of course, but a paradox can contain a truth or, as in this case, offer a challenge. Perhaps Lady Jackson wanted to suggest that in a world made up of nation states, and likely to remain so in the foreseeable future, it was still entirely possible for a nation state to see itself not as an island entire in itself, but as a part of the main, to adopt John Donne's words.

It is this viewpoint that the Canadian Government adopted in a recent basic and exhaustive review of our foreign policy. The process of review has taught us many things about ourselves, and about the world we live in. In particular, it has brought home to us how interdependent the world has become, in terms of power and politics, in terms of the economy and in the very terms of man's life on earth. Independence, on an individual basis or as a political entity, is dear to man's heart. Millions have fought and died to achieve it and some are still doing so. Perhaps it always was a relative term; certainly it is today. Nations can and do enjoy a measure of independence, but it can only be enjoyed with a much greater interdependence. Not even the super-powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, enjoy full independence today. We have, therefore, sought to base our foreign policy on the national aims of the Canadian people, shaped by the constraints and opportunities of the prevailing international situation.

Men of goodwill everywhere respect the aims of your association, Mr. Chairman. You are working for a better, happier and safer world, your aspiration is one that can lift man's eyes from his immediate day-to-day concerns to a more distant objective.

Even as we look to the future, we must live in the world as it is, a world of nation states, complementing one another, competing with one another and inevitably coming into conflict with one another. And, at the same time, a world of nation states that are becoming increasingly interdependent. There is only one crew on Spaceship Earth, and we must work together as a crew if we are to continue to travel in our orbit with even a measure of safety and well-being. We must find a better base for our security than the fragile and uneasy balance of deterrence; we must achieve a better distribution of the world's wealth and a more rational use of the world's vast but finite resources.

It is a fortunate thing for Canada that your meeting here coincides with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, and that it gives us another opportunity to welcome the Secretary-General, whose name and work are honoured throughout the world. Of all the attempts to bring order into the world community, going back as far as the *Pax Romana*, the United Nations is the most significant and the most successful. It is sometimes suggested that the United Nations has outlived its usefulness. Canada categorically rejects that position and that interpretation. I, for one, as a man who must live in the world and as a foreign minister who must take part in its councils, cannot envisage a world without the United Nations. It is true that in my speech on behalf of Canada at the General Assembly last year I voiced certain criticisms and certain doubts about aspects of the United Nations' procedures and operations. I did so on behalf of a country that has been an active participant in the work of the United Nations since its inception, a country that is fully committed to the principles in the Charter and that will continue to play its full part as a member state.

We should remember that the United Nations as at present constituted is not, in the end, an embryonic world government. It brings together nearly every country on earth (in Canada we believe that the sooner proper arrangements can be made to bring in the few that remain outside the better), but even as they come together the nations often act in a self-interest that is limited and confining. As a forum to regulate the great questions of war, peace and security, the United Nations has not, perhaps, lived up to expectations for the very reason I have just suggested. On the other hand, we can take heart from the quiet, steady and immensely rewarding work the United Nations and its agencies are doing to bring about a better ordering of the relations between nations. I should like to refer to a few of these efforts.

Over the last several years, the United Nations and its Disarmament Committee in Geneva have made real progress in the field of arms control. In 1970 the Non-Proliferation Treaty came into force -- the most important achievement to date. Very shortly, the Committee should reach agreement on the draft text of a treaty banning weapons of mass destruction from the seabed, which we hope will be endorsed by the General Assembly and opened for signature shortly thereafter. It is also encouraging that, parallel with these efforts in the United Nations, the United States and the Soviet Union are pursuing their negotiations on measures to curtail the strategic arms race in both offensive and defensive missiles.

I said earlier that the United Nations has not played the role in peacemaking that its founders foresaw. But we must acknowledge the intractability of the problems it has had to contend with. In the tragic Middle East conflict, for example, the only generally acceptable machinery for peacekeeping and peace-making endeavours has been United Nations machinery. It is in the United Nations context that the great powers have been seeking to bring to bear their invaluable influence toward promoting a settlement. It is a United Nations cease-fire which has at last been restored, opening the way for possible movement toward peace talks. If, as we earnestly hope, these talks are successfully launched in the weeks ahead, it will be under the aegis of the United Nations Secretary-General's special representative, Ambassador Jarring, that the search for peace will go forward. Facing such problems, I ask myself, without an organization having the global stature of the United Nations, where would we turn?

As regards United Nations efforts to achieve social justice, I need only mention the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which came into force last year. The world community simply cannot afford racial discrimination, as much for practical as humanitarian reasons. I commend the efforts of the Secretary-General to secure the signature and ratification of the Convention by all member states in this year of rededication.

The field of international law is one of fundamental importance, and a field of endeavour in which Canada has been active for many years. The work of the United Nations toward the development of a body of law to govern outer space is an example of how the nations working together can anticipate problems that are still, perhaps, far off in the future. The work of the International Red Cross Conference on international humanitarian law held last year in Istanbul is an example of how problems that have been with us for years can be faced by co-operative action. A declaration of principles of co-operation and friendly relations among states is likely to be proclaimed as part of the anniversary celebrations in October after seven years of study and debate by a special UN Committee. This declaration could have great influence as an authoritative interpretation of the basic Charter principles regulating the relations between states.

Of special interest to Canada, with a coastline said to be the longest on earth, is the law of the sea. The United Nations is on the verge of reaching agreement on a set of principles to govern the exploration and exploitation of the seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. Canada has long been an innovator in this field, and our new Act of Parliament establishing a pollution zone in the Arctic, not for our benefit only but for the sake of all mankind, is an example of state practice that will lead, we are confident, to international agreement and new international law.

The threat to the Arctic ecology posed by the possibility of oil-spillage in the frigid Arctic waters is only one in a long list of threats posed to our new physical environment by our uncontrolled exploitation of the world's resources. It is hard to believe that our search for the economic betterment of our peoples has, as a by-product, opened the possibility and the very real threat of the destruction of our environment. We find ourselves in a rapidly accelerating situation, faced with a threat that is increasing in a geometrical rather than an arithmetical progression. In the technologically-advanced nations we have to find, as a matter of the utmost urgency, means to

recapture the purity of the atmosphere, the waters and the earth. In the developing countries ways must be found to achieve the benefits of technological advance without paying the price of a polluted environment. The world community, and individual nations, have very hard choices to face. I pray that we shall face them and meet in a straightforward way the challenges they pose. It is in this framework of urgency, if not crisis, that the United Nations conference on the environment will meet in Stockholm.

Dealing briefly in this way with some of the work of the United Nations in bringing about a better world order, which must in the end come about by political means, I emphasize that we should not underestimate the organic growth that is going on, slowly but steadily, to build up the infrastructure upon which an eventual world order must rest. As international treaties, United Nations conventions and declarations, international law and jurisprudence continue to regulate and settle specific problems between nations, they are clearing away the underbrush, so to speak -- letting us see more clearly the difficulties that remain to be overcome.

Canada, Mr. Chairman, is a peace-loving and a peace-seeking nation. Canada is not founded in the blood of revolution but upon agreement reached after years of discussion and compromise. It lives by discussion and compromise. We hold passionately that the world's problems are not to be solved by armed conflict or sterile confrontation but by quiet, steady, peaceful negotiation. This is a belief we share with you and your organization, Mr. Chairman. And we have faith. There are signs that the seventies may be the decade of negotiation, as the sixties, tragically, was the decade of confrontation and conflict. I have already mentioned the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks; in recent weeks we have seen a treaty signed by the Federal German Republic and the Soviet Union that is a most hopeful augury of *détente* between the East and West. For the first time in many years, we can see the beginnings of progress toward peace talks in the Middle East. The signs that China is coming out of a long period of isolation, while presenting a challenge, must be welcomed, since it is totally unrealistic to contemplate world order and world security without the full participation of that ancient culture and powerful modern state.

If the coming years see the relaxation of tension the world needs so desperately, they will also see the freeing of vast resources now locked up in sterile confrontation -- resources that should be put to work to recapture and safeguard our threatened environment, to meet the urgent needs of the developing nations, to offer to the peoples of the world the possibility of a life not only richer but fuller and more rewarding.

This, in the end, Mr. Chairman, is surely the aim of your Association. It is Canada's aim, too.