Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade | Ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Commerce international

99/4 CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE LLOYD AXWORTHY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE NATIONAL FORUM

MONTREAL, Quebec
January 22, 1999 (1:15 p.m. EST)

Canada is off and running. Three weeks ago, we took our seat at the Security Council table. Even in that brief period, the Council has been engaged in a number of crises — in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Angola, and Iraq. The future promises to be no less active. The demands of Council membership are fully proving to be as challenging and as unpredictable as we had anticipated.

It was for that reason that we invested significant energy in preparing for our tenure. As several observers have rightly noted, the election process was long and demanding. However, it was time well spent. Like other campaigns, we used it to listen to, consult, and canvass extensively the views of our constituents: the UN membership and the Canadian public. We had the opportunity to try out ideas and to convince others about the direction that we wanted the Council to take in a much changed international environment.

As you know, Canada won its Council mandate with an unprecedented majority. This confers considerable credibility to our presence there. Evidently, our platform — based on human security and developed with extensive input from Canadians — had great resonance with the UN's membership. With this endorsement in hand, we are ready to bring our approach to the Council's business.

Recently, certain commentators have offered opinions about Canada's role on the Council and reactions to our plans. Coming only three months after our election and three years after our campaign began, I am gratified they are now prepared to offer advice. I have no doubt that as they inform themselves better about the realities facing the Council and listen harder to what Canadians have been saying about our place in the world and at the UN — as we have been doing — they will be able to comment constructively on what we are trying to achieve.

For our part, we will continue the process of consultation with Canadians. To that end, I am pleased to announce today the launch of a new Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Web site dealing with Canada at the United Nations. It provides the latest information about our Council activities while giving Canadians a place to relay comments and suggestions. In addition, the latest issue of Canada World View, the Department's foreign policy magazine, focuses on our involvement at the UN, including our latest Security Council tenure.

I am also very happy to have this opportunity to address the second in a series of National Forum discussions on Canada and the Security Council. The National Forum process has proved to be useful in involving Canadians in foreign policy issues. I have no doubt that these meetings will be as productive as past consultations have been.

The first forum held in Saint John, New Brunswick, two weeks ago generated animated discussion.

The level of participation was high and the interventions well prepared. This attests to the lively, encouraging and enduring interest Canadians feel toward the United Nations — an institution that is an integral part of our global persona and an organization that we have worked so hard to nurture.

Today, I would like to describe briefly some of the ways I believe the world has changed since we last served on the Security Council, review how Canada has responded to these changes, and then outline some of the ways we have proposed to use our tenure to update the Council while addressing Canada's priorities.

A Changed International Context

Canada last held a seat on the Security Council ten years ago. During our tenure, the verities of the Cold War were just beginning to give way to a new, uncharted path to the future. This evolution has continued. While some may choose to ignore it, as we take our place at the Council table, the global context in which the Council operates, the membership it represents, and the challenges it faces are considerably different than a decade ago.

However, global peace and security — obtaining it and maintaining it — remains the central concern of the international community and the main responsibility of the Council. Yet, as the world has changed, and continues to change, so too has our definition of peace and security. As a result, our game plan is in need of an update. To this end, a few certainties have emerged to guide us.

Most importantly, as recent events in Kosovo and Angola tragically demonstrate, civilians are increasingly the main victims and targets of violent conflicts. Especially the most vulnerable. It is estimated that 90 percent of casualties from armed conflict are civilian. This is partly the result of a change in the complexion of war. The majority of conflicts now occur inside rather than between states. Sometimes, internal conflicts have an international dimension or vice versa. Regardless of its origins, violent conflict has produced human tragedies of devastating proportions — massive refugee flows and the grossest violations of humanitarian law, including genocide.

The nature of threats to global security is evolving. Traditional military conflicts remain a concern. But the risks posed by others, often multifaceted and transnational, have sharpened. The challenges posed by illicit drugs, terrorism, environmental despoliation, human rights abuses and weapons proliferation respect no borders but cut across many disciplines. They can not be solved unilaterally. They do, however, have a direct impact on us through the safety of our streets, the air we breathe, the quality of our lives.

Isolationism is no option. The unalterable fact of our lives today is that they are more connected than ever. We live in a wired world, with open markets, porous borders and real-time reporting of wars. Far off concerns, isolated from our own lives, are a thing of the past. And while globalization can be positive, it can also expose all of us — especially the most vulnerable — to economic and social insecurity.

The common denominator of these new realities is their human dimension. Our changing world has increasingly put the individual and, more precisely, the security of the individual, at the centre of global affairs. As a result, the safety and well-being of the individual — human security —has become a new measure of global security.

Promoting humanitarian objectives — protection from abuse, reducing risks of physical

endangerment, improving quality of life, and creating the tools to guarantee these goals — should and are providing a new impetus for concerted global action.

The international community is being mobilized to address subjects that affect everyday lives. These new threats require that we see security increasingly in terms of human, rather than state needs. This is not to say that traditional state-based security concerns are obsolete. Indeed, human security and national security are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they are opposite sides of the same global security coin.

Canada's Response

Canada's foreign policy priorities and activities have also evolved since our last tenure on the Security Council. In response to the new global realities, we are increasingly focussed on issues that strike directly home to the individual. This human-centred approach adapts longstanding Canadian foreign policy goals — advancing national interests while building a better world — to new international circumstances. It is complementary, not an alternative to, state security concerns, and is based on a number of elements:

Engagement not isolationism: Canadians have long been open to the world. This openness creates both prosperity and vulnerabilities. Sooner or later, directly or indirectly, others' insecurity becomes our problem and, in some cases, our insecurity. The transboundary nature of many of the challenges we face makes co-operative action at different levels — global, regional and local — all the more essential if they are to be tackled effectively.

Promoting peacebuilding: Human security can be enhanced by strengthening the capacity of a society to manage its differences without violence. This is why we established the Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative two years ago. Working with civil society, the Initiative funds practical projects to build democratic institutions, increase local capacity, for example, training for legislators, jurists, public servants, or creating an independent media — all with a view to establishing sustainable peace.

Advancing fundamental standards of humanity: New and updated international humanitarian and human rights instruments will help to guarantee protection for individuals. They serve to expand the reach and scope of humanitarian norms. They set a higher standard of global behaviour to which we are all bound. This was the objective, for example, behind our strong support for the conclusion of the UN Convention for the Protection of Humanitarian Workers and the creation of the International Criminal Court.

Reforming existing international and regional organizations: Institutions established in a different era, such as the United Nations Security Council and the OAS [Organization of American States], need to better reflect the changing nature of threats to peace and security — especially the human dimension of these threats. This will give us the collective capacity not only to respond to crises but to be proactive in moving human security forward. We have been making efforts to this end at the OAS and the OSCE [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe]. As I will outline
below, we intend to bring this approach to the Security Council during our tenure.

Pursuing new, innovative partnerships and coalitions: Canada is working in concert with other like-minded countries to advance global action on human security issues. For example, Canada, with Norway, has established a flexible framework for co-operation among like-minded countries from all continents to advance action on human security issues, for example, children in armed conflict and the proliferation of small arms. In our hemisphere, I am pursuing discussions with my colleagues about how to address the impact of illicit drugs on our societies.

However, it is evident that foreign policy is no longer only the prerogative of nation-states and diplomats. New actors on the international scene, including non-governmental organizations, business associations, and trade unions have a growing influence. They can play a positive role in achieving our objectives as was, and continues to be, the case with the ban on anti-personnel mines.

Using soft power concepts — creatively: Negotiation rather than coercion, powerful ideas rather than powerful weapons, public diplomacy rather than backroom bargaining — these are effective means to pursuing many elements of human security, an approach Canada is particularly well suited to use. In the information age, new communications tools in particular should, can, and have been used effectively in the service of our goals.

Finally, using robust action — when necessary: Let there be no mistake. Promoting human security can also involve the use of strong measures including sanctions and military force. Canadians have fought and died — including in two world wars — in defence of human freedom and security. Our pursuit of human security confirms this tradition. We have been firm in confronting the challenges of weapons of massdestruction — from Saddam Hussein's defiance of the UN to nuclear testing in the Indian subcontinent.

In Kosovo, it is the defence of humanitarian objectives — the protection of civilian lives — which brought NATO to the brink of using military force last autumn. Faced with a renewed crisis now, a military response may yet be required. Canada stands ready to do what is necessary to ensure that this human crisis is resolved.

Our focus on human security should therefore not be misconstrued as softness. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how dealing with the devastating impact of landmines, the proliferation of small arms, the scourge of drugs, the exploitation of children, preventive measures against war crimes — and organizing concrete global action to confront them — could be interpreted by some as a sign of weakness.

In fact, it is more a direct expression of how the Canadian experience of using talents of accommodation, negotiation and goodwill to overcome differences — leading to a unified tolerant Canada — has application and use internationally. We are called upon to give leadership, training and direction on peacekeeping, drug interdiction, policing and the development of innovative approaches to overseas aid. Our resources are not unlimited but they are put to good use. And when conditions warrant, we are prepared to use vigourous action in defence of human security objectives.

The Security Council and Human Security

The United Nations Security Council remains the paramount global instrument to safeguard peace and security. A strong, effective and purposeful Security Council is therefore essential. However, as Canada takes its seat at the Council table, the Council faces challenges to its credibility. It is falling short of the responsibilities entrusted to it by the international community.

The Council has not been immune to the new realities of the international system. Canada's last mandate (1989-1990) coincided with the end of the Cold War and a renaissance in multilateralism. Superpower rivalry gave way to greater co-operation. At the Council, there was a surge of activism and engagement. Between 1991 and 1993, the Council launched 15 new peace operations compared to 17 in the previous half century.

Even more remarkable was the Council's willingness to address civil and intra-communal conflicts. These were uncharted waters for a body originally conceived to manage more traditional inter-state security issues. The Council authorized a series of "second generation" peace operations, for example, in El Salvador, Haiti, Cambodia and the former Yugoslavia. They had complex mandates, often including democratization, human rights protection and humanitarian assistance alongside more traditional peacekeeping roles. There was optimism — and high expectations — about what multilateral action could achieve.

Unfortunately, this era of euphoria has given way to a period of relative inertia. The Council has limited its involvement in an increasing number of conflicts. It can be uneven on which conflicts it chooses to focus: for example, there is a perception that resources are focussed on Europe at the expense of Africa. And it is entirely inactive in responding to some of the new challenges to human security. Setbacks in Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda have diminished the resolve of Council members to stay the course. However, other factors affect the Security Council's capacity to act, some rooted in resurgent isolationist and unilateralist impulses, others in a renewed pursuit of narrow national self-interest — and, most disturbingly, in the shortage of funds caused by the arrears in payments of several states.

The result has far-reaching implications for the Council. While obliged by the UN Charter to carry out Council decisions, some countries may begin to choose not to do so. In the absence of strong, coherent global action, would-be aggressors may be tempted to act — whether their targets are other states or civilian populations within their own borders. Weakened collective security places undue burdens on individual countries, ad hoc coalitions, and regional organizations that do not always possess the capacity or legitimacy to respond effectively.

Canada's mandate comes at a historic juncture. It is an opportune moment to try to renew the vigour with which the Security Council approached its tasks earlier this decade. Canada will work to shape a more proactive Council, one which focusses more on the human dimension of security and the unprecedented civilian toll of modern conflict. We will endeavour to do so by working to broaden the Council's agenda and decisions to include human security themes, to reassert the Council's leadership, and to make its operations more transparent and responsive to the UN membership.

The Council has made progress toward broadening its mandate. The interpretation of what constitutes a threat to international peace and security — the litmus test for Council action — now includes intra-state issues. The need to respect state sovereignty has by no means withered. Indeed, it remains important. But this notion has been challenged — in some cases outweighed — by the need to act in support of purely humanitarian goals, to restore stability, and in defence of the security of the individual as in Cambodia, Somalia, Mozambique or Haiti.

To address today's security agenda, the Council must embrace an even more comprehensive, updated view of its mandate. We will work to enhance the Council's capacity to address new, non-traditional threats to security such as ethnic conflict, mass refugee flows, illicit small arms trafficking, gross human rights abuses, failures of governance and the rule of law, and abject human deprivation.

There are positive trends to build on. The Council has held debates on emerging, cross-cutting security issues such as child soldiers, and some members have made efforts to broaden the Council's purview to encompass others such as terrorism and mass refugee flows.

Such debates help to put emerging issues on the Security Council's radar. These should continue with more active follow-up. We intend to use our Council presidency, beginning in February, to

address the protection of civilians in armed conflict including the safety of humanitarian workers, the displaced and refugees, and the special needs of war-affected children.

We also will seek to ensure that human security concerns are incorporated into the Council's actions and decisions. For example, in establishing new peace operations, the Council has sought to reflect the multifaceted response needed to build lasting peace, including where appropriate, human rights, peacebuilding, rule of law, democratization and humanitarian components. The UN's current operations in Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic and Bosnia are recent examples. We will ensure that this practice is continued and strengthened.

The Council could make more active use of conflict prevention instruments. The best way to enhance human security is to prevent violent conflict from occurring in the first place. For example, the deployment of the UN mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNPREDEP [UN Preventive Deployment Force] has helped to ensure that the Balkans conflict did not spill over into that country. Good offices missions and the deployment of Special Representatives also can be useful tools, provided that the Council is prepared to deploy the necessary resources to back them
up when necessary.

We should also examine carefully the use of sanctions by the Council. They are a powerful tool and need to be used appropriately to be effective and credible. For that reason, all aspects of sanction regimes — the objectives, the type, the targets, the implementation, conditions and timing of their suspension — need to be considered closely and continually monitored by the Council for their cost-effectiveness from a strategic and human security perspective.

That is why Canada made its proposal, now being considered by the Council, concerning the Iraqi situation. To move forward, the Council needs clarity. To that end, we have suggested two separate assessments be prepared regarding disarmament and the humanitarian situation. We hope that this information will allow the Council to agree on a way forward that balances the need for compliance with its obligations by the Iraqi regime and the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people.

Efforts to broaden the Council's horizons in its words and deeds need to be complemented by a reassertion of the Council's leadership. This means that the Council's authority, especially concerning the possible use of military force, be respected. We sideline the Council at our own risk. But it also means that the Council must assume its responsibilities — and take hard decisions — when the need arises.

The Council must also correct its tendency to focus selectively on certain conflicts while neglecting others. The Council's writ is universal. It represents the entire international community. Consequently, its credibility depends on a willingness to address threats to peace and security wherever they occur. And when it decides to act, it needs to have the resources to do so effectively. The progressive starvation of peacekeeping resources, human and financial, is a matter of deep concern.

When the Council takes action, its decisions must be adhered to. For example, in Angola, the Council imposed an arms embargo on UNITA [National Union of the Total Independence of Angola] forces. This was a welcome, precedent-setting move that for the first time aimed UN sanctions at a non-state entity. However, evidence suggests that this embargo is not being respected. The result is a country awash with weapons, making the conflict harder to resolve and endangering the security of both Angolans and international personnel — as we have tragically seen in the past month.

Sanction busters need to be identified and held accountable. As chair of the Angola Sanctions Committee, Canada will work to this end, in particular by ensuring full compliance with existing

sanctions relating to oil, diamonds, and arms while recommending further measures as appropriate. Our goal is to limit the ability to make war while encouraging progress toward peace.

Leadership also requires imagination and outreach. The instruments to address the new security agenda exist — in the Security Council's own tool kit and among the vast panoply of international, regional, national and civil society organizations. What is needed is leadership to bring these together to address the multi-dimensional aspects of these conflicts.

The Council should redouble efforts to collaborate with other international bodies, including key UN agencies, and with non-state actors in mobilizing and co-ordinating resources while fully respecting their respective jurisdictions and mandates. The Council is moving in this direction; the head of the UN's Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the UNHCR [UN High Commissioner for Refugees], and the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] are in contact with the Council in an attempt to ensure that their activities and concerns are reflected in the Council's deliberations.

Also to this end, Canada has promoted and will continue to promote collaboration between the Council and other regional and sub-regional security organizations as we have in Haiti between the UN and the OAS, or in Bosnia where the UN, the OSCEand NATO all have their roles. Such arrangements must spring from willing and effective partnerships, not from a void created by Security Council inaction. Pressures to contract out the Council's ultimate responsibility for peace and security to other bodies must be resisted.

To be a leader, the Council must also be ready to act — rapidly. For this reason, Canada continues to support the creation of the UN Rapidly Deployable Mission Headquarters. This will allow the Council to quickly establish an initial beachhead for a UN peace mission, thereby increasing the chances for effective and timely Council action.

Finally, to be more effective, the Council also needs to be more inclusive. Canada will continue to promote greater participation by non-Council countries whose nationals, military or civilian, are involved in the conflicts on which the Council is deliberating. For example, the Council's decisions on peace operations have a direct bearing on those participating in them. Their governments should have a substantial say in these decisions.

This means formalized and timely consultations with troop-contributing countries. It means finding ways to allow non-members to contribute to informal Council meetings, without diminishing Council members prerogative to meet in camera as well. And it means providing greater information flow from the Council presidency and the Secretary-General to the wider UN membership. Here, too, there has been progress on which we can build.

We could also seek opportunities for the Council to draw more systematically on the views and insights of NGOs and other civil society actors with direct experience on the ground. Currently, their views are infrequently solicited by the Council and only on an ad hoc basis.

These and other concrete proposals have the backing of a majority of UN member states. Far from constraining the Council's efficiency, they will improve the decisions the Council takes and render its actions more effective.

Before concluding, I should like to add a few words concerning Security Council expansion and the use of the veto. These are important subjects. However, efforts to reform the Council in these areas and Canada's position should not be confused with our current membership on the Council nor our

agenda during our tenure. These issues have been under consideration by the UN membership as a whole for several years. Canada has and will continue to be actively engaged in discussions on this subject in the appropriate UN working group. However, Canada has not launched, nor do we have any plans to launch, new initiatives on either issue.

Concerning expansion, Canada supports enlarging the Council between six to ten seats, covering all regions in the non-permanent category only. Adding new permanent members would only deepen the existing imbalance between unelected, unaccountable permanent members and the vast majority of others, including major UN supporters such as Canada. With regard to the veto, Canada believes that limiting its use to issues concerning threats to and breaches of the peace, as well as acts of aggression, would enhance the long-term effectiveness of the Council and better respect the original intentions of the drafters of the UN Charter.

Conclusion

Since we last served on the Security Council, the world has changed. Canada's foreign policy has also evolved. However, what remains constant is the need for a strong, effective Security Council, capable of addressing the changing needs of our time.

Admittedly, we have an ambitious agenda. There are certainly no guarantees that we can achieve everything we set out to attain. We need to be realistic. And clearly, the real-time demands of the world will inevitably — indeed already have! — intruded on even the best-laid plans. Over the next two years, we will work to include human security concerns in the Security Council's activities, endeavour to help reassert the Council's leadership, and attempt to make it more transparent and responsive to the views of the international community.

The Security Council is not an institution open to revolutionary change, and Canada has no illusions about the feasibility of introducing sweeping reforms. We will apply ourselves to the substantive issues before the Council during our term, bringing our values and interests to bear on them. We will advance our human security agenda by working with other Council members to explore how and when it may be appropriate for the Council to take action in conflict situations in which it may not have become engaged in the past. The Security Council in recent years has in fact moved in the direction that Canada is advocating.

I have outlined some of the ways in which we plan to pursue our objectives. I look forward to hearing your views. These will serve to refine our own and provide the input that we need to make Canada's contribution to the Council over the next 24 months the most effective and valuable possible.

Thank you.