



CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 73/14

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CANADA'S CURRENT FOREIGN POLICY

An Address by the Secretary of State
for External Affairs, the Honourable
Mitchell Sharp, to the Canadian Press,
Toronto, May 2, 1973.

One of my very distinguished predecessors as foreign minister, the late Mike Pearson, acquired an enviable reputation for working with the media. He was well known for the candour with which he spoke to the press, particularly in background briefings, but also in his more formal encounters with your representatives. But the world in which he operated was a much different one from that in which we are working today. Our relationships with other countries, and particularly with the United States, were, if I may say so, a good deal simpler than those with which we are concerned now. It was, of course, Mr. Pearson himself who, in the 1950s, noted and commented upon the ending of the days of what he described as our easy and automatic relationship with the U.S.A. Nevertheless, even ten years ago Canada's foreign policy might still have been roughly described, as it was somewhat earlier by a cynical young member of my Department, as U.K. plus U.S. over 2 (U.K. + U.S.).

Moreover, international affairs was not a subject which appeared to touch directly upon the lives of very many Canadians, except when the prospect of global war threatened to involve us. Consequently, until relatively recently, the great majority of the Canadian people were prepared to leave the determination of these issues in the hands of a few foreign affairs "buffs" like you and me. In short, foreign affairs were things that concerned other people. Canada's own relationships seemed to be secure and tidy. We supported virtue in the United Nations and performed many useful functions throughout the world as a matter of duty, not of national necessity. This very satisfying role was largely made possible by the virtual absence of any serious problems in the international arena that directly affected the lives of Canadians simply because they were Canadians.

I should not like to suggest that at a certain hour on a certain day all this stopped and we suddenly realized that Canada's foreign interests could