



Statements and Speeches

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A SECURITY IMPERATIVE FOR THE EIGHTIES

A Speech by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the World Federalists of Canada, Winnipeg, Manitoba, June 13, 1980.

I am very pleased to be able to address this audience of world federalists, a movement which under various forms and in various countries, has been very active since the end of the Second World War as a result of that terrible experience. This is a very important kind of audience because it represents many of the idealists — but often and usually I think, very realistic idealists — in our country. I have made no secret of the fact since becoming Secretary of State for External Affairs that I am a world federalist and this had provoked quite a few reporters' questions who always profess to see some inconsistency between being a Canadian foreign minister and being a world federalist. It has also provoked some curious letters to newspapers and to me, some demanding to know what world federalism is. I think it is symbolically very important that those of us who do have the opportunity of being in the public eye, like my Parliamentary colleagues, they are able to be recognized as people having this kind of idealism. This is also an interesting occasion to speak on the subject of disarmament, because this year is the mid-point between the first and second Special Sessions of the United Nations on Disarmament and I think that makes it an appropriate moment to focus on Canada's priorities, particularly in this area of arms control and disarmament.

I realize that in recent months it has been fashionable to assume that arms control and disarmament efforts have come to a complete halt, and some do not even acknowledge the real achievements which have taken place over the past 20 years in the field of disarmament. But the government does not share this pessimism and I would, to indicate that, quote from this year's Speech from the Throne:

"Canada's imperative is clear. This government must continue its strategy to suffocate the deadly growth in the nuclear arsenals of the world. We must, and we will, actively co-operate in international efforts to negotiate agreements on verifiable means of arms control and disarmament, and seek to rally others to a cause that is no less than human survival on this planet."

Those were the words which the government wrote for Governor-General Schreyer to read in the Speech from the Throne. Now, some people in high places in recent months have expressed the view that war is imminent or inevitable and that the only appropriate measures to take in these circumstances are those that strengthen our defence capacity. The government doesn't accept this analysis, even if it is made by distinguished generals, or by whoever it may be made. I don't believe that these people have the pulse of the world, and I don't believe that they are reading the signs any better than ordinary people nor nearly so well as those of us who have a more basic optimism.
