

nize that because of the fact there is the notion of ideological pluralism that the Caribbean has adjusted itself to, it is now quite possible that Caribbean countries may not vote the same way on all political issues.

Q: Would you go so far as to say that they are closer to being a bloc than the Latins are?

Mr. McComie: Well, yes, but I would hedge a bit by saying it is possibly because they are recent members. As soon as you come into the club you tend to stick together in the same way as migrants do when they come to a country.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, it is no secret that the English-speaking bloc looks to you for leadership in the OAS, and we agree that the Commonwealth countries have more cohesion in terms of philosophy.

Mr. McComie: I have taken pains from the very beginning of my term of office to indicate clearly that as the Assistant Secretary General of the whole OAS, I have equal responsibility to all of the members. I could not say that there are any special pressures that are put on me by the Caribbean countries merely because I am a Caribbean person. But certainly what they do expect of me is wherever there are issues that affect the Caribbean, I will be much more aware and more informed about those and I would certainly be able to bring to the decision-making process an expertise which perhaps would not be there if I were not Assistant Secretary General.

Canada and OAS

Q: You have been talking about the Caribbean basically, and Canada, as you know, has a very intense interest in Haiti and the English-speaking Caribbean. How would Canada fit in?

Mr. McComie: I would think that Canada would find no difficulty really fitting in to the position which I outlined for the English-speaking Caribbean countries in the sense that we have both been formed within the notion of the Commonwealth. The closeness between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean is largely due to the shared experience that we have had as members of the Commonwealth. But then, of course, one would have to recognize immediately that Canada is a more powerful country, more developed than anybody in the Caribbean and is a donor of assistance rather than a recipient. I think the Caribbean countries would be the first to recognize the importance of Canada to them as a friendly donor country. I think that Canada's own interest with respect to its relations with Latin America would add a new dimension that none of the other English-speaking countries would have, with the possible exceptions of Trinidad & Tobago and Jamaica. Canada would have to take a three-dimensional look if it were a member of this organization. The first dimension is its relations with the United States because of the very close historical links between them; second, its relations with the Commonwealth Caribbean, because of close historical links; and thirdly, its developing interest in extending into Latin America per se, and this would be for trade and investment assistance. So I would think that Canada would certainly be much more involved in the Organization than would the Commonwealth Caribbean countries.

Q: If I understand you correctly, you are suggesting

something quite new. For many years Canada has been to some extent in fear that by joining the OAS it would be paired off with the United States.

Mr. McComie: You are saying that.

Q: Yes, Prime Minister Trudeau said that one reason for not joining the OAS was that we already have enough quarrels with the United States and that we do not need more. You are saying that there is another identity or another identification that might be found within the Organization that could be at least as important.

Mr. McComie: Yes, because I think that Canada has taken steps to indicate that it recognizes this. The recent report of the Parliamentary Committee on External Affairs, for example, has indicated the importance for Canada of becoming now a hemispheric country, and as long as Canada has taken that decision, then its relations not only with the United States but with the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean become extremely important. What I was trying to suggest was the framework in which I think it might pursue those other relations.

Cold war in the Americas

Q: One of the problems with Central America right now is the East-West dimension. Sometimes it appears to observers that what is going on in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala is that the United States and the Soviet Union are having it out on a small scale. Wouldn't Canada as a NATO country exacerbate that particular situation?

Mr. McComie: No, I do not think that. I suppose theoretically that may be so but I do not think that in practice this is what would happen. Canada seems to be very conscious now that, because of its position as a developed country, it has got to establish its own links with the rest of the hemisphere and therefore any threat to the peace and security of the hemisphere is of interest to Canada; and not just as a member of NATO, because the threat may not have anything at all to do with NATO. So that Canada has got to begin looking at the other instruments for maintaining the peace and security of the hemisphere; not just instruments such as the Rio Treaty, dealing with threats of armed aggression from outside the hemisphere, but also with being involved in the development of the hemisphere, because development is in a sense the positive side of security and I think that it is this particular view that I see emerging when I take a look at Canadian foreign policy.

Q: The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. MacGuigan, has announced that Canada will expand its aid to Central America to more than \$100 million over the next five years as compared to \$40 million in the last five. Would that contribution be more helpful if it were not bilateral, if it went through this Organization?

Mr. McComie: I do not think that we have had information as to whether that increase in assistance would be bilateral. All of the members of the Organization are extremely aware of the importance of Canadian assistance through OAS in its capacity as a Permanent Observer. Now here is Canada without being a member actually involved in giving technical assistance to other Latin American countries, so that it is quite possible as I see it that any