



# Statements and Speeches

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## APPROACHES TO FOREIGN POLICY – DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES

An Address by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Eleventh Leadership Conference of the Centre for the Study of the Presidency, Ottawa, October 18, 1980

Not long ago France opposed Canada's participation in the annual economic summit meetings on the grounds that we would only echo U.S. views and proposals. Today, of course, French leaders know us better – and will have the opportunity of getting to know us even better still when we welcome them to the first Ottawa summit next year.

I am disappointed but not entirely surprised when some people even now assume that Canada's foreign policy is made in the U.S.A. What does surprise me, however, and fills me with dismay, is when some people assert that Canada's foreign policy should come out of the same mould as the U.S.A.'s. I am surprised that anyone could fail to recognize just what profound differences there are between the U.S. and Canadian moulds.

It is true, of course, that the people of Canada and the people of the U.S.A. are North Americans all, formed by the continent they share, holding in common the values of Western civilization, enriched by the contributions of yet other cultures, and united in a mutual devotion to freedom and the democratic tradition within the framework of a federal system. It is also true, however, that differences of size may involve differences of perspective, and that long ago our two countries chose to seek the same goals by different roads, at a different pace, and chose as well to adopt different institutions for the conduct of their political affairs.

What I propose to do here is to examine how some of these similarities and differences have influenced and are reflected in the Canadian and U.S. approaches to foreign policy. In doing so, I will focus especially on the differences – not in a negative spirit, I assure you, but in a spirit of enquiry. Difference, after all, need not mean conflict. And differences must be identified and understood if we are to build on the similarities.

Let me begin with an example that in my view typifies both the similarities and differences. I think it is fair to say that human rights occupy a more prominent place in the foreign policy of Canada and the U.S.A. than in that of any other country. Other countries, of course, are also concerned and active, but there is something peculiarly North American – peculiarly naive, critics would charge – in the attitude of our two nations towards human rights. That something special is a direct result of our being the heirs and custodians of both the reality and the dream of the New World. "O my America! my new-found-land!" exclaimed John Donne to his mistress going to bed, and I hope that we in North America will never lose that same sense of wonder and joy in our contemplation of this continent, nor ever lose our eagerness to have others

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