

It has already become a cliché to speak of the turbulent or troubled eighties, of a decade of crisis, of a time when the only constant will be change, but like most clichés it does contain a large measure of truth. The world has seemed to careen from crisis to crisis-- Afghanistan, Iran, and now Poland. If The Wall Street Journal is to be believed, even relations, between Canada and the United States have seriously deteriorated. No one wants to repeat history. If we are all to arrive at the next decade safe and sound, we shall have to understand the issues which underlie this turbulence. Understanding the causes of change is the first step in meeting the challenges ahead.

We, Canadians and Americans, living at the frontiers of the modern technological age accept change, even rapid change, as the normal state of affairs. Steeped in the idealism of our own dynamic, successful societies we embrace change with optimism and impatience. But events in Eastern Europe have forcefully reminded us, again, that change does not necessarily come quickly in the world, nor does it always mean progress. Just as the Prague Spring gave way to a winter of repression, so have the Poles now tested the limits of reform only to see them contract.

Canada, in concert with the United States and our other NATO allies, has condemned the repression in Poland. We have called for the lifting of martial law, the freeing of detainees and the restoration of the dialogue between the Government, Solidarity and the Church. On December 30, the Prime Minister of Canada called for the beginning of a process of national reconciliation in Poland. We have seen since, however, that the Polish authorities seem determined to maintain the essentials of the martial law regime. General Jaruzelski's speech on January 25 left us with no illusions on that score. For the present, therefore, we are obliged to treat the situation in Poland as one more likely to deteriorate than to improve. While we should not take the view that there is no hope for a return to a more civilized regime in Poland, I must admit that there is little present evidence on which to base such hope. The Western countries will have to draw the necessary conclusions from this state of affairs-- and indeed, they are doing so.

With the eventual accession to power of a new generation of Soviet leaders, change will come to the Soviet Union too. Will they see the world in terms of defending the gains already made, or might they prosecute the expansionist dreams of Lenin? How will the Russians, the Armenians, the Uzbeks share power inside the USSR? Are relations between the Soviets and their satellites immutable? What is certain is that the challenge to the West is probably as great as it has