

North-South Relations

must be stopped and reversed, and that a new balance must be sought to increasingly lower arms levels. The stifling strategy which I suggested at the first special session of the UN on disarmament in 1978 remains valid in this regard. Nothing has occurred in the meantime to weaken my convictions on this point.

The Canadian nuclear safety policy, revised in 1974 and 1976, sets high standards. However, we apply it pragmatically in a spirit of respect for the sovereignty and sensibilities of our partners in the nuclear field. We shall continue to refine this policy so as to develop an effective national system of non-proliferation and guarantee as much as possible that Canadian nuclear exports do not contribute to nuclear proliferation.

● (1540)

[English]

I have spoken about the global macro-economic situation, which affects all our lives, and about the decline in the state of East-West relations, which also affects us all. Less understood is the potential impact of North-South tensions on Canada and other industrialized countries and the need to give priority to the management of that latent crisis.

The first step should be to understand what we mean when we refer to the North and to the South. One can legitimately question whether there is a distinct North and a distinct South in every sense. Within the Third World there are as many differences as in the world itself. From the outset it needs to be emphasized that the South is not a homogeneous group of countries. It contains countries with the highest per capita income in the world and those with the lowest, countries with the fastest growth and those suffering negative growth, countries with the world's biggest financial surpluses and those with the greatest deficits, countries with abundant natural resources and those with none and countries with sophisticated, modern industrial economies and those with rudimentary, tribal, agricultural societies.

Yet the South is not a myth. It is a group of countries, most of them former colonies, held together by a shared perception of their status in relation to the rest of the world. In their view, solidarity among themselves is the way to exert countervailing power against the weight of the industrial North. Their vision of a new international economic order proceeds from their common view that the old rules have not permitted equal opportunity or an equitable sharing of the fruits of effort.

They are right. Justice is on their side. But even if we were not moved by justice, common sense and self-interest should tell us that if we want growing markets for our products, an orderly global economy and peace in the world, we should support reform. We should enhance the growth of opportunities of the South, selecting the best bilateral and multilateral techniques to do the job. That effort should include a process of global negotiations.

The picture today is not one of unremitting gloom. Since World War II living standards in many Third World countries have improved dramatically. New economic power centres are

emerging. The newly industrialized countries must find the markets and the means to permit them to develop.

Some countries of the South are growing stronger every day. Let us help them grow. But there are other countries, the poorest of the poor, which are struggling just to survive. Their situation will be critical for as far ahead as the eye can see. Eight hundred million people live on the margin of human existence. They live with overwhelming deprivation, with despair and in a state of perpetual crisis. The management of this crisis is a test of both the humanity and the credibility of governments in both North and South.

The best tool with which to help the poorest is outright aid. We have to assist them to develop the potential to feed themselves and provide for other fundamental needs like health and shelter. It is a ghastly cynicism which pretends that international co-operation cannot bring these lives closer to minimum standards of human dignity.

The overwhelming fact which governments must face is that international aid efforts are inadequate. The gap between rich and poor is not closing but opening wider, in spite of everything that has been done.

The Canadian aid record can be improved and is being improved. My government is committed to that. But I do point out that we have made a lot of progress since the sixties. Our efforts have done a lot of good, and we have won ourselves solid friends in the world. In Canada and throughout the developed world there is a need for even greater public involvement—not just through round table discussions among the knowledgeable and already involved, but in communities and schools—so that growing public support will encourage governments to do more and to do it better.

I firmly believe that the world can and must grow enough food, provide clean water, decent housing, health care and real hope for all its people. It can be done, but it will require a gigantic effort. That is the message of the Brandt commission, reflected eloquently in the report of our parliamentary task force on North-South relations. I congratulate the chairman of that task force, the hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Breau)—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau:—and the members of all the parties in this House who contributed to that most compelling report.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Its message is one which the government can endorse and support.

I believe that despite bleak political prospects for greatly increased aid flows from the recession-prone North, reason will prevail and a major assault on world poverty can still be launched in earnest.

The need to assist the poorest is one emphasis of Canada's efforts in international co-operation. But the primary need of those countries with growing export potential is, as the slogan says, "trade, not aid". These are the countries which are