



# Statements and Speeches

---

No. 80/11

## CURRENT ISSUES IN CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

A Statement by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, Ottawa, June 10, 1980.

The opening of the 1980s has been marked by serious new political and economic strains in the world community. While there have been favourable developments, such as the peaceful achievement of independence by Zimbabwe, the climate has deteriorated in a number of key areas. The most disturbing has been the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, which violates all norms of acceptable international behaviour. It was rightly condemned by the overwhelming majority of the world's states. The dangers of this action are the greater in that it took place next to Iran, where revolution continues to consume the country, and next to a region where the Western world has a vital strategic interest in oil. The continuing illegal detention of the American hostages in Iran represents a serious challenge to the civilized conduct of relations between states, and preoccupies a superpower already facing serious challenges elsewhere. Further west in this troubled region, the May 26 target date for an Israeli-Egyptian accord on interim autonomy arrangements for the West Bank has passed without agreement and has cast doubts over the Camp David process. In Indochina, Vietnam maintains 200,000 troops in the conquered countries of Cambodia and Laos. Cambodia is suffering the most terrible starvation and persecution.

The doubling of oil prices last year is having a major disruptive effect on a world economy which was already shaken by inflation, recession and serious problems between North and South. The impact of these new high prices will be hardest on the poor countries of the Third World. The leaders of the seven largest market economies will be discussing key economic issues at their Summit in Venice later this month. New global negotiations on the world economy will be launched at the United Nations this fall. All partners recognize the urgency, as well as the great difficulty, of these issues.

Canada has been very active both in relation to major issues affecting the world community and in pursuing its bilateral relations. In the last three months we have been pleased to receive visits from the Prime Minister of Japan and the President of Mexico. I have already visited Latin America, Europe and Africa, where I was particularly honoured to represent Canada at the independence ceremonies for Zimbabwe. I have attended meetings of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

In the present difficult climate, I believe that Canada must affirm what is constant in its foreign policy. We need not pretend that just because the world is evolving, we must review every aspect of our foreign policy. The very essence of an effective foreign policy is its long-term coherence. It is this that makes us a dependable partner and that underlies good relations. Our foreign policy arises from a number of constant

---