



# Statements and Speeches

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## CULTURE, TECHNOLOGY AND FOREIGN POLICY

An Address by De Montigny Marchand, Deputy Minister (Foreign Policy), Department of External Affairs, at the Conference of the Canadian Association of Futures Studies, Vancouver, August 14, 1982

...I shall structure my remarks, most of them arguable and all of them personal, around four themes.

*First*, some of the formative continuities that strike me as fundamental in shaping the way Canadians look at the world and at themselves.

*Second*, a look at change and vulnerability in our own more recent experience, producing fluctuation and evolution in some of our assumptions and beliefs.

*Third*, and to illuminate our policy culture, a discussion of two trends in Canadian foreign policy, often portrayed as in conflict but which, I shall do my best to persuade you, are two sides of the same coin.

And *fourth*, by way of a conclusion, roughly equal parts of optimism and pessimism about our policy culture projected into the future.

### Policy culture

First some formative elements — some of the continuities in our policy culture.

Canada's space, geography and climate are in many ways the most fundamental of the formative influences on our policy culture. They are so obvious that they must be laboured a bit to be understood.

The geographic scale and climatic harshness of this country explain a range of behaviour from our leading role at the Law of the Sea Conference to the consular work of our missions in California or the Caribbean. They explain our very early dedication to the technologies of transport and communications, and an intimate experience of the energy demands of those technologies. They may also explain why we are the homeland of Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan, those twin prophets of culture and communications.

And I believe our space and climate also serve to engender such values as self-reliance and mutual aid, the rewards of wanderlust and encouragement of mobility. What is perhaps surprising is that our experience of space and distance did not promote a sense of isolation but, on the contrary, appears to have conditioned us to welcome the existence of a wider world, and predisposed us to take an interest in its diversity.

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