



Bulletin

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FOREIGN POLICY UNDER REVIEW

The following is part of the introductory remarks by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp at the opening of a seminar on relations with Europe, in Hull, Quebec on January 3:

...When the Government decided, shortly after the last election, to undertake a review of foreign policy, we did so because of the conviction that profound changes have been taking place in Canada and in the world around us in recent years. We want to be sure that our foreign policy is appropriate to the situation in which we find ourselves today and that it serves effectively Canada's current interests, objectives and priorities.

Having taken a decision to review our foreign policy, we had to settle on a method of approach. Foreign policy is, in fact, not a single entity but a collection of policies designed to deal with various aspects of our relations with the rest of the world. We lump these together under the convenient title of "foreign policy", although there is not likely to be any single set of policy decisions which will cover all the situations we encounter in this increasingly complex world. When we set out to review our foreign policy, therefore, we had to break the subject down by some means. We might have started by looking at our own country to determine what kind of people we are, what are our interests and needs, what are our strengths and weaknesses and, consequently, what role we are best suited to play in world affairs. Alternatively, we could begin by looking at the world around us to determine what kind of situation we are living in, what changes are taking place or ought to take place, and what kind of world we should like to see. One cannot separate these two approaches. They are both essential components of any foreign policy. We have chosen to concentrate first on the world in which we find ourselves, rather than begin by an

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attempt at national self-examination which could prove to be an artificial exercise if it were not related to the actual state of the world.

SPECIAL TASK FORCE ON EUROPE

One of the first steps we took in breaking down the broad subject of foreign policy into areas for intensive study was to set up a special task force on Canada's relations with Europe. Obviously, there are few areas where Canada's existing relations are so diverse and extensive; there are few areas where Canadian foreign policy has been so much a subject for debate.

We have the additional reason for assigning first priority to Europe that, at the same time, the Government is undertaking a review of defence policy. A very large and important part of Canada's defence efforts is directed towards Europe in pursuance of the commitments we have made as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It was, therefore, important that, at the same time as we were reviewing our defence policy, we should review our relations with Europe in the political, economic and other fields, which are inevitably intermingled with our defence commitments.

The special task force on Europe is made up of senior officials representing those government departments with special interests in our relations with Europe. It is under the joint chairmanship of Mr. Robert Ford, our Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., and