

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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An Address by Mr. Klaus Goldschlag, Director-General, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Department of External Affairs, to the Third Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Latin America, Ottawa, October 19, 1972.

I am pleased to participate in this conference. I am particularly pleased to see the many distinguished Latin Americans who have joined you to explore the patterns of partnership for the future. I am impressed by the range of the dialogue that is to mark the conference. I am sure you are right in aiming at clearer understandings in specific areas. I know that if Mr. Sharp had found it possible to be present today he would have wanted to point to the close identity between the purposes of your conference and those of the Government in pursuing the new Latin American dimension of its foreign policy.

It is important to see the new policy in proper perspective. It is not as if Canada were emerging from "100 years of solitude". Far from it. We have had close and productive relations with Latin America for many years. We have been represented in many Latin American capitals and have had diplomatic relations with all. We have carried on an expanding, if still relatively modest, level of mutual trade. Private Canadian capital has been at work for many years in helping to open up the economies of Latin American countries. We have been involved in a program of development assistance to Latin America since 1964. We have, on a selective basis, sought and obtained membership in a number of inter-American institutions. We have also been working with Latin Americans internationally on a whole range of issues of common concern.

Are we, then, simply setting out to do more of what we have been doing in the past? If not, in what sense are we justified in looking on the foreign policy review as something of a watershed in the Canadian relationship with Latin America?

First, the review represents an up-dating of Canadian foreign policy. We had to take account of the cumulative result of change in Canada and in the world around us. It was clear that the time had come for us to recast some of the basic assumptions of our foreign policy. The changing scene in Latin America was very much part of this process. We wanted to be sure that we were pursuing policies -- in Latin America and elsewhere -- that were likely to be relevant to the world of the 1970s and 1980s.