



Statements and Speeches

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DOMESTIC PRIORITIES AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY

Statement by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Canadian Club, Winnipeg, September 19, 1985.

I want to speak today of the intimate and essential connection that exists between domestic priorities and international policy.

The priority of a national government in this country at this time has to be to encourage jobs and economic growth. But the purpose of a national government in a country like ours, at any time, is to express the spirit and the nature of the country in contemporary terms.

A nation is more than its gross national product. Economic policy and economic accomplishment are essential, but so also is it essential to have a sense of the goals and purposes which make us distinctive and make us strong. I approach my remarks today in that spirit.

The election of a year ago was an expression both of what people wanted and what people rejected. There was an overwhelming positive desire, on the part of Canadians everywhere, for policies of national reconciliation, to bring an end to a decade or more of fruitless division among the various governments and regions of the country.

There will always be differences; they are part of the vitality of Canada. But the preoccupation with national differences; the definition of national affairs as disputes over differences, was something Canadians wanted ended. We take it as part of our mandate to rekindle a pride and awareness in what we can do as a strong whole country.

Canadians wanted their government, in our actions, to express and demonstrate real confidence in the country, real confidence in the nature of Canada, in our identity, in our future. They wanted a government that would be prepared to stand up for Canada in the world, that would be prepared to say "here we are, we are different from other countries, we are different from our neighbours, we have distinct interests of our own, we are going to express those in the world, we are going to assert those in the world".

Nations grow gradually, becoming stronger in stages. And those stages rarely change dramatically. They shade one into another, and suddenly we realize that old assumptions no longer fit.

Ten and 20 years ago, national policy assumed a vulnerability about Canada. The creation of the Foreign Investment Review Agency, the development of the national energy policy, and other programs were based upon the view that there was a certain fragility to the Canadian nature, and that our fragility had to be protected against the rest of the world.
