



Statements and Speeches

No. 79/25

CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH EUROPE

A Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Flora MacDonald, to the Canadian Institute of International Affairs and the Centre for International Studies of the University of Toronto, Toronto, December 6, 1979

Shortly after the election, I announced that the government would be re-examining foreign policy. Since then, I have made several suggestions about the questions I believe such a review should address. The Prime Minister has called for "the widest possible review in the most public possible place" and we shall be establishing a parliamentary committee for this purpose. It is the government's firm intention to ensure a thorough discussion, involving all interested Canadians. The contribution that organizations like the Canadian Institute of International Affairs can make to this process hardly needs underlining. Your contribution will be welcome, both individually as citizens and experts outside government, and collectively, as members of the leading private Canadian organization in the field of foreign affairs. I also invite members of the academic community to take this opportunity to share their knowledge and opinions with the broader Canadian public and the Parliament and Government of Canada.

The review will be thorough.... Meanwhile, some decisions must be taken, and we are taking them: about Rhodesia; about Cambodia; about Iran. Crisis management must not, however, be allowed to pre-empt serious reflection about the kind of world in which we seek to serve Canada's interests. I want on this occasion to reflect about one important part of this world: Europe. This you might look on as a personal contribution to the discussion for which I hope the committee will find time on its heavy agenda.

It is, I think, particularly opportune that we should address this subject here in Toronto. The European origins of our country are nowhere more evident — the cosmopolitan quality of the city a constant reminder of the vitality which immigration has brought to this country. It also reminds us of Canada's unique character. We live comfortably with Europe's culture, history and languages, but Canadians of European descent are particularly conscious that in Canada we have a more open society than the older European countries, one that is less status- and clan-conscious, in which there is perhaps a unique opportunity for self development and the fulfilment of family ambitions. We can look at our European relationship, therefore, recognizing these profound ties of history and culture, but confident in our separateness.

The government has said relatively little so far in specific terms about policy towards Europe. Certain broad lines have been sketched out; however, the emphasis has been on continuity: continuity in adhering to our obligations in NATO; continuity in the search for closer relations with the evolving European community; continuity in confirming and extending *détente* as the framework within which East-West relations
