

CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY: THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

INTERVIEW WITH THE HONOURABLE BARBARA McDUGALL,
CANADA'S SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Q. *You are now in charge of a middle power's foreign initiatives in a rapidly changing world. What does Canada have to offer that world?*

A. We are proud to have a foreign policy that is largely value driven. Without being overly pretentious, we're convinced that greater application of traditional Canadian values could be useful in solving some of the world's problems. Canada also offers the world a sizable economy. Trade is key to economic health both in Canada and abroad, and we put a premium on expanding our trading relationships.

Q. *What kind of values are you talking about?*

A. A distaste for violence, a sense of moderation, a love of democracy, a respect for human rights, a willingness to compromise, a respect for diversity and the rule of law — these are all attitudes that could create a more conciliatory world — plus

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the belief that prosperity, while it must be pursued fervently, cannot be pursued intelligently while ignoring the need for reasonable measures to promote social justice. If more countries were to strike that balance between social and economic imperatives, I think they would stand a better chance of preempting the huge rifts that keep cropping up between the world's rich and the world's poor. Canadians aren't perfect, but I think we live our lives according to a pretty decent set of values.

Q. *You say Canadian foreign policy is value driven. Realistically, isn't every foreign policy driven by a nation's self-interest?*

A. They're definitely linked. It is in Canada's interest to pursue our own prosperity, but we don't go around the world looting — we operate in a way that benefits ourselves and the countries with which we trade and in which we invest. It is in Canada's interests to seek a less volatile world. The values we bring to the table internationally have promoted and will promote a more stable world.

Q. *Some people — even some Canadians — think of Canada as being a bit boring.*

A. Perhaps the world could use a little more boredom — if that means behaviour that is reasonable enough to be predictable. The truth is that one of Canada's most notable characteristics — tolerance — gives law-abiding people in Canada more scope to be themselves than they would have just about anywhere else in the world.

Q. *When you took over as Secretary of State for External Affairs earlier this year, you inherited a department with a history. Was there anything about Canada's past performances on the international scene that particularly pleased you — or particularly bothered you?*

A. I have always felt we have a proud history in terms of our contributions to international affairs. I think of our participation in numerous peacekeeping missions; when you talk to people, Canada's name is almost synonymous with peacekeeping. I think of the wars we have been involved in

and the valour of Canadian soldiers. I think of our determined pursuit of multilateral solutions to world problems, which has left us with the reputation as international team players rather than as individual glory seekers. I think of our liberal trading record, our generosity in terms of overseas development assistance, our independent stances on issues such as Suez and South Africa and Nicaragua. There's not much there to be embarrassed about, and a lot that should make Canadians feel good about themselves.

Q. *What about Canada's domestic record? Surely that is part of our international image.*

A. I think the world looks at Canada and sees a sane, compassionate society. We've made some mistakes, for example our treatment of our aboriginal communities. Canadians in general are pretty responsive about fixing things, once they understand that there is a problem.

Q. *Canada has its own divisive forces. Is the government's mandate to keep Canada unified going to have a major influence on the country's foreign policy?*

