



# Statements and Speeches

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## THE WORLD CHALLENGE: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EAST/WEST TENSION

An Address by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Fiftieth Couchiching Conference, Geneva Park, Ontario, July 29, 1981

...The theme of this year's conference — international development at a time of East/West tension — goes to the heart of the world's most pervasive problems. How we approach its resolution will profoundly affect the quest of all mankind for the most fundamental of all human and social goals — namely, the attainment of peace, security and social justice.

Tonight I propose to lay out the general dimensions of this global challenge hoping that in the course of this conference other speakers will probe particular aspects of it, so that we may better understand the dynamics of our common dilemma.

The terms "North/South" and "dialogue" are convenient catch-phrases which to some degree over-simplify and obscure the realities of our international relationships. Too frequently in recent years the Third World has been portrayed in the West as a homogeneous group of nations having a number of common characteristics. The reality is quite otherwise, and by ignoring this we run the risk of engaging in simplistic analysis and of devising unworkable solutions. Nothing could be farther from the truth than the image of a world divided between a powerful North and a weak and dependent South. Events throughout the Seventies grossly altered that picture to the point where we must now confront not dependence, but interdependence. The most dramatic example has been the emergence of OPEC (the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), now confronting the people of the North with a nagging situation long familiar to the South, namely dependency. Like the nations of the South, we too are seeking self-sufficiency.

### Common goal

The evolution of viable courses of action make it imperative that we clearly understand the nature of the developing world. We have to recognize that in parts of the South, economic growth rates have outstripped those of the North. A number of developing countries are competing successfully in markets in the North. Even a nation like India, having a popular image as a poor and dependent nation, is now the ninth largest industrial power in the world. Very clearly, the notions of what we call "the developing world" in reality have only one important common characteristic — the desire to make their own way in the world.

But that goal will be next to impossible to achieve if the Third World nations are persistently caught up in the tensions of the North. Canada's parliamentary task force on North/South relations pin-pointed the problem this way:

"The ability of the North to promote or respond to the interests of the South is seriously impaired by tensions within the North, between the countries of the West

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