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The Honourable Mitchell Sharp,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
Interviewed by Charles Wasserman
for CBC Weekend,
Sunday, February 28, 1971.

(The following is a transcript of the complete interview, some portions of which were omitted on air to fit the time available.)

Q. Mr. Sharp, on Thursday we had a message from the President of the United States concerning the state of the world. One thing I noticed in it was a remark that the President felt the need to reconcile within the Western alliance the tendency towards autonomy and towards unity. Where does Canada stand on this? Does it tend more towards autonomy within the alliance or unity?

A. It's very difficult to answer this very precisely. In our relations with the United States, for example, we opt for autonomy in general. And we also believe that it is important that there should not be confrontation between blocs, that the West should not deal as a bloc with the East, that there should be enough diversification and autonomy amongst the members of the alliances that we can deal with individual countries on the other side of the Iron Curtain. So we place a good deal of importance on autonomy. On the other hand, we recognize that if we are going to pursue successfully a policy of détente, that we have to act together. For example, in relation to Germany. The German Ostpolitik is very much in our interest as Canadians, I believe, and therefore we want to support the Germans, and therefore we must act together with them and certainly not contrary to their desires at the moment.

Q. Do you think the Ostpolitik of Chancellor Brandt is going in the right direction as it's going now?

A. Yes. I was at the NATO meeting after Willy Brandt became the Chancellor, and there was a tremendous change. Up until that time one had the impression that we were going to follow a policy of confrontation. When Willy Brandt became Chancellor and he began to talk about having discussions with the Russians and the Poles and even with the German Democratic Republic, one began to see the breaking of the old patterns and some hope that the present impasse in Europe would not continue indefinitely. So, we in Canada who had been advocating a policy of détente for some time, found ourselves supported very strongly and in a position in turn to support the Germans.

Q. In studying the message of President Nixon, I seem to discover a certain contradiction in that he also spoke favourably of the Ostpolitik but at the same time seemed to be worried that Chancellor Brandt would be forced by some domestic political events to give away more than the alliance in the West would like. Do you feel that that's a danger?