



Statements and Speeches

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NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE IN NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS

An address by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the American-European Conference of the Friedrich-Neumann-Stiftung, Ponta Delagade, Sao Miguel, Azores, September 4, 1982

...Western Europe and North America have had their revolutions and fought their wars. Postwar reconstruction and development have led to increased political stability, basic justice, a large degree of social equity and financial stability. This is in no way to diminish the very real strains on our financial and monetary systems, nor to belittle the inordinate amounts of unemployment, nor the vicious cycles of inflation that presently beleaguer all of our societies. Rather, it is to point out that in comparison to many corners of this earth, and particularly in contrast with the developing nations, we are still the privileged few.

As such, I believe that Western Europe and North America have a special role to play in the North-South dialogue, and that we must continue to play that role, in spite of our own difficulties.

Western Europe and North America have had a particular role in the international economic system. It is interesting to note that the United Nations of today, with its large-scale multilateral institutions is, to a large degree, the outgrowth of wartime reconstruction and development plans. The Second World War required greater economic co-operation than previous wars, and postwar economic planning began during the conflict.

In a real sense, the war in Europe cast the die for the new economic order. It is equally important that the philosophy underlying the principles of the United Nations Charter was essentially liberal in the classic sense, — based on freedom, openness of thought, generosity and the abolition of privilege. Aid itself became part of liberal democratic institutions; this was true in multilateral and bilateral programs, although in the early Fifties, as evidence by the Colombo Plan, there was, as there is today, the security aspect as well.

In the North-South context, the liberal tradition may be seen to underlie the push for political independence in developing countries. It has fostered subsequent efforts to encourage continued commitment to human rights and pluralistic processes in newly established states. It has accepted the concept of non-alignment, but at the same time has tried to insist that the non-alignment be genuine, so that developing countries may be free of East-West tensions, which so often sap the energies of those who need that energy most.
