

While talking about food problems, I cannot help but digress to mention the absolutely desparate situation arising in Cambodia, now called Kampuchea. Formerly a major rice exporter, that country faces one of the most appalling food shortages in the history of the world. So disruptive have been the effects of its internal political upheavals, and the invasion by the Vietnamese, that only five per cent of the arable land in that country is now under cultivation. The projections of need are staggering. Worse still, however, is the complete disruption of the internal functioning of the country, the total break-down of its infrastructure. Even if food can be gotten to the country, there are no facilities left to distribute it. Seldom has the international community been faced with such a massive need, so difficult to fill.

As I mentioned, the third world countries have shown an increasing independence in their dealings with the developed world. What is not nearly so clear is whether they will be able to find enough community of interest and collective will to deal with some of their own problems.

Looking more narrowly at the world of our western allies and traditional trading partners, the scene here, too, is unlike that of a decade ago. I needn't recite for this audience the factors that have so changed the economic atlas. Who, ten years ago, could have foreseen the present state of the U.S. dollar, the readjustments called for by the energy situation, today's price of gold? Our current experience and future prospects for a combination of high unemployment, continuing inflation and slow economic growth have enormous implications not only for the western countries themselves, but also for the role they play in the international scene.

Well, Mr. President, these are a few of the things that I notice are different about the world today compared with ten years ago. And looking at these factors, I cannot help wondering whether the emphasis and priorities of Canadian foreign policy are really serving our best interests in this substantially different world. Let me give you just a few of the questions that come into my mind in this regard.

I look at the distribution of effort that our Department of External Affairs and our aid programmes have, and I wonder why we are so deeply committed in certain parts of the world. What are Canada's real interests in this involvement? It certainly doesn't have to do with trade; our commerce with most of those countries is minimal. We're not like the former colonial powers of Europe who have both ties and obligations dating from the previous century.