



CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

71/4

THE COMMONWEALTH IN THE SEVENTIES

Excerpts from a Statement by Prime Minister the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference, Singapore, January 21, 1971.

This, as several of our colleagues have already stated, is a decade of change; it is rapidly acquiring, as well, the reputation of a decade of violence. We cannot prevent change. Are we able to contain violence? We must all hope that we can. In order to do so, however, we dare not pursue only the short-term issues, however urgent and serious they may be, nor dare we be content to administer only to the symptoms of the serious diseases that afflict the world. Governments will retain their credibility as instruments of orderly change only if we face up to the underlying problems.

Perhaps for lack of understanding, perhaps because a familiar problem, no matter how bitter, appears preferable to an unknown one, we tend in international gatherings to concentrate on the near future. As political leaders, we face competing and often contradictory demands upon the time and upon the physical resources of our governments. In setting priorities, the temptation, indeed the political imperative, favours often the immediate problem at the expense of the long-range, of the urgent as opposed to the important. Both, however, require balancing.

Canada concluded in recent months a comprehensive review of Canadian foreign policy. Our aim was to fix objectives and priorities in sufficiently long and broad terms to ensure that essential Canadian interests and values are safeguarded in a world where radical change can be accepted as a norm. We declared at that time that our external activities should be directly related to national policies pursued within Canada. Canadian foreign policy, as is the case with that of all states, is the reflection abroad of national priorities.

We are all familiar with the process of formulating long-range economic plans. The essence of such planning is the identification and definition of objectives, the assigning of priorities to the various objectives which have been identified, and the allocation of resources in accordance with