



Statements and Speeches

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TOWARDS CLOSER CO-OPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES

Notes for a Speech by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Strategic Planning Forum, Ottawa, October 25, 1984.

...Much of the discussion in North America on the policies of the new government has singled out particular programs — changes in the National Energy Program (NEP) or in the Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA). There will be changes in those programs — the details will come after the Speech from the Throne in November and after we have completed consultations with Canadian [provincial] governments and other Canadian groups that are affected. This morning — rather than speculate on what we will do — I want to discuss why we will do it. I want to open a debate, not close it. I want to indicate some of the assumptions on which I, as a senior minister in the new government am acting, and to invite you and other Canadians to propose practical alternative ideas that would allow Canada to excel — not just to survive and certainly not to diminish, but to excel — in a changed and in a changing world.

Let me digress to two precisions (as we call them in High River). First, the NEP and FIRA. Without wanting to scoop the announcements of my colleagues, I want to make the point that if you live in the small towns of the Pembina Oil Field of Western Alberta, you tend to judge the success of the National Energy Program less by the television commercials of Petro-Canada and more by the Canadian drilling jobs and the Canadian service jobs that were lost in your own community. If you are a development officer in Scarborough or Longueuil, you tend to see foreign investment in terms of jobs, not sovereignty. The people in the Pembina field or in Longueuil or in Scarborough may be mistaken, although on September 4 they were pretty emphatic. They think that the programs that I have mentioned are wrong for Canadian reasons. Not for foreign reasons, but Canadian reasons. They don't work effectively as Canadian policy, and our government has a domestic mandate — and in our view a domestic obligation — to change programs that haven't worked. Often those changes will influence our relations with other countries, but that is a secondary consequence.

The second precision has to do with the world beyond North America. One risk in giving such early priority to our relations with our largest trading partner is that the suspicion can grow that we are ignoring our other opportunities and our other obligations in the world. Our actions will demonstrate that this priority is neither exclusive nor excessive. We have a commitment to the wide world, to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to markets in Asia and Europe and the Middle East that require, and will receive, active Canadian attention. Part of the job the Prime Minister gave me is to ensure that Canada continues to see the world whole, and I will do that.

Now let me come back to the question of Canadian self-confidence, and the world in which a self-confident Canada has to operate.
