



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADA REVIEWS ITS FOREIGN POLICY

A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, to the Standing Committee of the House of Commons on External Affairs and National Defence, October 27, 1970.

The foreign policy papers record decisions made by the Government and give notice of action it intends to take. To this extent they state Government policy. To a much greater extent the papers, and particularly the general paper, present the Government's views -- about Canada's place in the world, about national aims and interests and about how these can best be fostered....

In the sixties the world situation had evolved rapidly and Canada itself was passing through a period of profound change. Policies which served Canada well in the past required review. A growing body of Canadian opinion was questioning Canada's position on specific foreign policy issues. The Government was concerned about the focus of the criticism being expressed, with its concentration on issues primarily involving other powers and their policies and interests, and its preoccupation with Canada's role than with the furtherance of national aims and interests. The Government embarked upon the review with these concerns in mind, but above all with a determination to ensure that Canada's foreign policy would continue to meet Canadian needs in a changing world. Canadians needed to know that the things we were doing abroad were worth the good people and good money that we were putting into them.

The review involved identifying and testing the assumptions on which Canadian foreign policy has been based. One assumption, however, had to be accepted -- that for most Canadians their political well-being could only be assured if Canada continued in being as an independent, democratic and sovereign state. Unless Canada is independent and sovereign, we can have no foreign policy. Unless Canada is democratic, there is no point in public discussion.

Foreign policy for Canada, as for all other nations, is not made in a vacuum; the world does not stand still while Canada shapes and sets in motion its foreign policy. Canada's policy objectives may complement or compete with those of other nations. The aims and interests of other nations impinge upon Canada's freedom of action in the international sphere. We live in a world