

China seat at the United Nations. It is strange how non-controversial that seems now as President Nixon prepares for his history-making visit to Peking; in 1968 our early moves were looked upon with great reserve by some in this country.

Acceptance of our position as an Arctic nation was one of the considerations that led us, earlier this year, to sign a protocol on consultations with the world's other great Arctic power, the Soviet Union. Next month Mr. Kosygin will spend a week in Canada, returning the Prime Minister's visit to the Soviet Union. This is compelling evidence of the extent to which Canada and the Soviet Union share assets, interests and problems.

In these brief introductory remarks, Mr. Chairman, I have given some indication of the optic in which Canada sees today's world and I have stressed that we see ourselves first and foremost as one of the nations of the Americas. We accept our responsibilities as such, we intend to pursue our national goals and interests in this hemisphere and to play our part as one of its constituent entities. This has led us to a re-examination of our political, economic and cultural relations with the Latin American republics and the Caribbean nations, of whom there are so many distinguished citizens here today.

Concrete results of this re-examination can now be seen as Canada draws closer to the Inter-American System and develops closer bilateral ties with the nations of Latin America. We are joining more of the agencies within the System, and increasing our participation in others. We have applied for Permanent Observer status in the Organization of American States. Our application has been accepted in principle and modalities are now being worked out. This will lead to the establishment of a Canadian Mission to the OAS. If you wish to regard Permanent Observer status as a way-station on the road to full membership in the Organization I do not challenge your right to do so, although I cannot predict what course the Canadian Government may follow in the future. Much will depend upon how the members of the Organization and Canada see their best interests served. Certainly in a number of conversations I have had with Latin American governments, full membership was not seen as the first imperative for closer inter-American relationships.

The review of foreign policy to which I have referred identified Canada's central problem as "how to live in harmony with but distinct from, the greatest power on earth". I am sure this problem is one that is fully shared by our friends in Latin America and, in varying degrees, by most of the countries of the world. And so I must now set sail on rather a stormy sea where the charts that have served us well in the past seem suddenly less reliable and the navigation aids less fixed.