

For a generation, and until very recently, the world was locked in a sterile East-West confrontation, with China obsessed with its own internal difficulties and playing little part on the world stage, the nations of the third world engaged in a life-and-death struggle for survival.

Suddenly, Peking sits on the Security Council. President Nixon prepares to visit the two great Communist capitals, Moscow and Peking. The Soviet Union accepts a better arrangement between the two Germanies, responds after years of inaction to NATO urging for balanced force reductions in Central Europe, promotes a European security conference, engages in strategic-arms limitations talks with the United States, calls for a world conference on disarmament.

I cannot discuss all of these developments with you tonight, nor can anyone, I believe, be sure what they all mean for the peace of the world and the well-being of all men.

What is clear is that power relationships frozen for a quarter of a century are in the process of change and that trading patterns and monetary arrangements laboriously established are in flux. In these new and perhaps unsettling but at least hopeful circumstances, Canada is determined to preserve its sovereignty and its independence while, at the same time, refusing to remain locked in cold-war attitudes that have lost at least a part of their meaning and their importance. Canada welcomes the human face being shown by nations like the Soviet Union and China. Past history should not be forgotten but it should not be allowed to impede careful, prudent movement toward a saner and safer world equilibrium.

One thing seems to be clear -- that the emergence of China on the world scene and the presence of China in the Security Council will make it more difficult for the United States and the Soviet Union to settle matters between themselves. Only time will tell whether this is a healthy development in international relations. Although it will certainly have the effect of making the settlement of issues more difficult to achieve, settlements once reached may well prove to be more effective and more enduring.

In my remarks this evening, I have travelled a long way from this hall and from our reasons for being here. I have tried to show you a little of the changing world as Canada sees it. I hope I have given you some food for thought. Without further ado, I offer to all of you in this room and to all Canadians of Italian descent my thanks for all you have contributed to Canada and the Canadian way of life. I salute you all on this day of Christopher Columbus and so -- on with the dance!

S/C