



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 70/9

Some Elements of Canada's Foreign Policy

Address by the Honourable Mitchell Sharp,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
to the Association of International Law
and International Relations, Bucharest,
June 3, 1970.

...It is a very great pleasure indeed for me to be in Bucharest for the first time. Although relations between Canada and Romania are of relatively recent origin and have not been extensive, I am hopeful that my visit here and the opportunity it provides for discussion with members of your Government will contribute to the strengthening and broadening of our bilateral relationship.

My only regret is that I should be in your beautiful country at a time when it is suffering so grievously from the disastrous floods that have swept down your great rivers. Please accept the sympathy of the Government and people of Canada and their expression of hope for an early recovery. We have already provided some emergency assistance and we expect to be providing more soon.

I am particularly pleased to have the opportunity to address such a distinguished and learned assembly; I know from the Canadian delegates who attended your international seminar held here a year ago of the intellectual calibre of your Association and of your deep concern - which we in Canada share - for the security and peace of Europe. The Canadian delegates were most impressed with the forum for discussion which you provided and will again provide later this week - a forum in which scholars from many countries can talk to, and not merely at, one another. Such real exchanges of views are essential to international understanding and, unfortunately, are all too rare.

I wish on this occasion to go over with you some of the elements of Canada's foreign policy. The major factors determining Canada's foreign policy are its history, its geography, its culture and its economy. Our geography is a paradox. We are, in population, a small country of 21 million, only slightly larger than Romania. We occupy, at the same time, a vast land-mass, the second-largest country in the world, larger even than the entire continent of Europe. We have as our nearest neighbours, one on our southern border and the other across the North Pole, the two largest and most powerful countries in the world: the United States and the Soviet Union. Our cultural make-up is complex. We

are a country of two language groups, English and French, each with its own autonomous culture, and yet a third of our population is neither English nor French in origin. Many of our citizens have come from other parts of Europe, both Eastern and Western. There are, in fact, more than 40,000 Canadians of Romanian background who are contributing their rich heritage to the mosaic of our national life.

Although we are on the North American continent, we have as a country tried to maintain the European traditions that we have inherited and to keep in touch with developments in Europe, applying them to our own situation as appropriate. Our systems of government and law, our mixture of public and private enterprise, our subsidization of culture and our social security system are all based on European models. In addition, since the Second World War our determination has grown to build a Canadian national identity that is original and different from that of either Europe or the United States. Our economy too is, in some ways, a paradox. In spite of our small population, we are the ninth-largest industrial nation in the world and the sixth-largest trading nation. We are, therefore, more conscious than many other countries of the realities of interdependence in the modern world.

Our geographic, cultural and economic realities have traditionally led us, as a middle power, to complement our relations with the United States with ties to other countries of a more similar size. To us, this is one of the advantages of the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and now of the new association of French-speaking countries. In this context we find advantages also in NATO, quite aside from those of a security nature. In the economic field, because of our particular dependence on international trade, we have for a long time pursued a multilateral approach to world trading problems. This multilateralism in politics and trade might be termed the basic principle of Canadian foreign policy. The necessities of Canadian independence make it essential for us to remain open to the world at large.

In reviewing our foreign policy, we have not tried to change this basic principle; rather, we have tried to adapt it to the developments that have occurred in Canada and the world in the last 20 years. We have tried to take account of such factors as the economic recovery of Europe and the growth in Canada of a greater sense of identity, with the consequent desire for the proper discharge of the obligations of our sovereignty at home. We have also had to consider the expansion of Canadian horizons beyond Europe, North America and the Commonwealth to include the French-speaking world, Latin America and the countries of the Pacific. In other words, we have tried to take into account the fact that Canada is, at the same time, an Atlantic, a Pacific, an Arctic and a North American country.

As a part of this enlargement of our world view, we have increased our expenditures on aid to the developing nations, entered into negotiations for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China and sent missions both to Latin America and the countries of the Pacific. This does not mean, of course, that there has been a diminution of our interest in Europe. Indeed, our current review has confirmed one of the long-standing and basic elements of our foreign policy: that the security of Europe is vital to the security of Canada. Europe is the only area where the major nuclear

powers are in direct confrontation, and war in Europe could trigger nuclear conflict that would inevitably involve us. Our geography, placing us between the United States and the Soviet Union, means that any such war would be fought out over our heads. It is our concern to build real détente and security in Europe and, to this end, we attach importance to the firm establishment of normal working relations between countries whose ideological differences have in the past thrown up barriers creating mistrust and insecurity in Europe. It is our conviction that, in a reasoned assessment, common interests must outweigh differences in ideology.

It would be idle to pretend that there are not important differences in the foreign policies, as in the internal policies, of Canada and Romania. Yet our two countries have had many occasions to meet and to appreciate each other's point of view through our common membership in such multilateral organizations as the United Nations and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. There we found that often we were pursuing the same objectives and working jointly for international co-operation, peace and security. It was, indeed, in such organizations that our first official contacts developed. Our bilateral relationship, however, really began in 1967 - only three years ago - with an exchange of letters establishing diplomatic relations. Since then, the accreditation of ambassadors from Washington and Belgrade, the establishment of your trade office in Montreal and of your Embassy in Ottawa have all made their contribution to the growth of Canadian-Romanian relations. In this connection, I take very great pleasure in welcoming the decision of your Government to appoint an Ambassador to be resident in Ottawa.

Because we are so recently established in our diplomatic relations and are so far apart geographically, it is hardly surprising that contacts between our two countries have not in the past been extensive. It is my hope that Canada and Romania will, in the future, be able to develop areas of co-operation and exchange which will be to our mutual benefit. This will take time, of course, but we are prepared to examine with you ways in which our contacts can be broadened. In Canada, we have been impressed by the remarkable rate of growth of Romania's industrial output over the past 20 years. We take great interest in your achievement in the diversification of your economy, particularly in the areas of energy, metallurgy, and pulp and paper, textile and chemical manufacture. These industries and the general field of the exploitation of natural resources may well provide in the future areas of profitable exchange of technological and scientific knowledge between our two countries. We in Canada have developed some advanced techniques in a number of fields, such as resource extraction and energy production and transmission, which are of interest to other countries. You in Romania may be particularly interested in the type of nuclear reactor which we can offer. Co-operation in this field would have the additional advantage of promoting a considerable technological exchange.

Romania's broad approach to world markets is, in many ways, similar to our multilateralism. In bilateral trade relations we have already achieved some success. Last year, the value of Romanian exports to Canada increased markedly from almost \$2 million to over \$7 million. Canadian exports to Romania rose more modestly, to approximately \$1,200,000. There is, however, much scope for greater commercial effort on both sides.

Our cultural relations, too, could be expanded. In spite of some few visits of professors, students and journalists, Canadians and Romanians are largely uninformed about each other. We have a common base from which to work, for both our countries have benefited richly from the strong influence of the French language and culture. I hope that in the future we can do more in this area as well in order to achieve a better understanding and a more vital exchange between our people.

Like Romanians, we in Canada are vitally interested in the search for real détente in Europe and for a lasting solution to Europe's security problems. Europe has for too long been immobilized by artificial rigidities. We wish to explore every opening there may be for discussing seriously the issues that block the path to a stable and equitable political settlement on this continent.

Concerning the holding of a European security conference, which is as much in your minds as in ours, we have taken a positive and forthcoming attitude both in NATO and in our bilateral discussions with other European countries. This has been reflected in Canadian statements in the House of Commons and in NATO and in the Canadian reply to the Finnish initiative of May 1969.

We regard the communiqué and declaration issued by the NATO ministerial meeting in Rome last week as an important and positive move forward and we hope it will be so recognized by others. NATO has now accepted in principle the idea of multilateral exploratory talks with all interested parties about a conference on European security and co-operation. It has also made a precise offer, through the Italian Foreign Minister, to discuss with the other side the possibility of initiating discussions on mutual and balanced force reductions in accordance with certain guidelines. This represents a serious effort on the part of Canada and its allies to move from military confrontation to negotiated solutions of the underlying causes of tension.

I hope this NATO initiative will evoke a favourable response from the other countries of Europe, both aligned and non-aligned, so that further progress can be made. I think it should meet with sympathy and understanding in Romania because it corresponds closely to initiatives the Romanian Government has already taken for the purpose of encouraging movement toward a conference.

We think that a large-scale conference at the right time and in the right circumstances would be useful, that "all governments concerned" should participate, but that the agenda and timing are related in the sense that we must establish what problems are ripe for successful negotiation before we can determine whether it would be appropriate to hold a conference to deal with them. We are concerned to avoid holding such a conference prematurely, and for us the important thing at the moment is to move forward with the negotiating process rather than to decide when a conference might be held. This negotiating process has already begun in the form of bilateral discussions between countries of Eastern and Western Europe, negotiations between the GFR and its Eastern neighbours, and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. We hope it will continue and expand with preliminary discussions on mutual and balanced force reductions and exploratory talks about a conference on European security and co-operation. But negotiations can make progress only when there is a readiness all around to talk about something more than a mere freezing of the status quo in Europe. It

would not make sense for Western countries to be drawn into a conference where there is no chance, from the beginning, of an outcome reasonably acceptable to all.

Although not "geographically" European, we have a vital interest in Europe which has been recognized and, like you, we are concerned with negotiating solutions to the problems which still divide this continent. The courage and the realism with which Romania has sought to contribute to peace and security in Europe have greatly impressed us. We have a great admiration for Romania's ability and determination to express its own national character and to develop its own national course of action, within the realities of its geographic situation. As with Romania, it is our concern that all European countries, big or small, should be protected from outside interference and have their sovereignty and independence safeguarded.

There are, of course, other international matters which are of great concern to both our countries, and on which it is important to maintain an exchange of views. No one here needs to be reminded that the world situation in which we find ourselves is, unfortunately, marked by bloodshed and by the threat of a wider conflagration. I need refer only to the situation in the Middle East. I visited this area last autumn and, following conversations with Israeli and Arab leaders, came away more convinced than ever that the only way to achieve a real solution to the problems in the Middle East would be for both sides to moderate considerably their maximum positions. There is no evidence that any such moderating process has since occurred; if anything, an even more dangerous level of tension has developed. Canada's concern that some means should be found to move toward an accepted peace settlement on the basis of the Security Council Resolution of November 1967 has been emphasized to the parties, most recently when the Foreign Minister of Israel visited Ottawa several weeks ago.

The situation in Indochina is equally discouraging. We have watched with growing concern the spreading of the conflict from Vietnam into neighbouring Laos and Cambodia. The International Control Commissions in Indochina have obviously not deterred this development. We deplore this, as we do the apparent failure to date of the principals in this conflict to enter into substantive negotiations. A number of proposals have been advanced to try to get them to negotiate a settlement, but two months have gone by since the first of these initiatives was taken and we are no closer to a solution. We have not given up hope, however, that at the talks in Paris, or at a new conference, a lasting settlement can be reached to enable the Indochinese peoples to live in peace and to permit them to begin the essential work of economic and social reconstruction. We are ready to play our part in such a conference.

Turning to the present problem of global security and the nuclear arms race, the supreme challenge facing the international community is to find something better than the current balance of mutual fear and deterrence on which international security rests. There have been some recent positive developments. The first of these is the strategic arms limitation talks in which the United States and the Soviet Union are now engaged at Vienna. We do not expect instantaneous success in view of the complexity and the seriousness of negotiating the strategic balance of deterrence, but we hope that these negotiations

will eventually prove to be a turning-point in world history. The second important recent event was the coming into force of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which both Romania and Canada have ratified. In our view, this treaty constitutes the most significant concrete achievement to date in the field of arms control. These two developments are not unrelated, of course, particularly because, under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, all parties - and particularly the nuclear powers - have undertaken to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race at an early date. Without ignoring the complexity of the problems that lie ahead, these developments surely do constitute an auspicious beginning for the 1970s, which the United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed as a "Disarmament Decade". My Government assigned a very high priority to our efforts to contribute constructively to arms-control and disarmament negotiations and I am gratified that Canada and Romania have been able to co-operate so well in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva.

One cannot ignore the important role that China will play in the ultimate resolution of major world issues. We welcome the talks on border issues between the People's Republic of China and the U.S.S.R. and the recent talks between the United States and the People's Republic of China. As you know, for over a year Canadian and Chinese representatives have been meeting in Stockholm. We hope and expect that these will result in the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. In this regard, we have followed with interest the development of your relations with Peking. We hope that this is an encouraging indication of the possibility of expanding contacts with China, which we consider of the first importance if we are ever to achieve a stable and secure peace.

There are many other problems of direct concern to governments today. My Government is, as you are aware, compelled to be concerned about environmental problems such as pollution. We have recently introduced into the Canadian Parliament legislation aimed at safeguarding the vast natural resources of the Arctic area. It is the Canadian Government's view that all governments need now to strive as hard toward solving ecological and other environmental problems as toward international political problems.

In our political relations with Romania and in our respective views of the international situation, there are, of course, real differences. But, as I have indicated, there are also similarities and shared concerns. Because I hope it may further strengthen this foundation of our relations, I am grateful for the opportunity of this visit to Romania to meet with your statesmen, and for the privilege of addressing your organization .