



# Statements and Speeches

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## THE COMPELLING NEED FOR PROGRESS IN NORTH/SOUTH RELATIONS

A Speech by the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister, to the House of Commons, Ottawa, June 15, 1981

It is obvious to all of us that our world has become unpredictable and unstable. We would also agree that it has become more dangerous. Mankind is living in a state of more or less extended crises. Violence and disorder have become banal. Injustice no longer causes indignation.

This global instability has many causes. There are many more countries in the world community than there used to be, and each is vigorously asserting its own particular needs and ambitions. Economic problems and international disputes have increased in both number and severity. While the super-powers have grown stronger, they often seem to have lost control over events. We have seen international law and economic systems break down more frequently, causing people to believe that things are out of control. There is a generalized condition of crisis expectation.

We usually think of crisis as a sudden shock, as a surprise, a burst of violence, an invasion. Obviously, the world needs to prevent such incidents when prevention is possible, and to contain them when they occur.

It must be understood, however, that such incidents usually result from pent-up tension. They are the flash-point of deep-seated problems. If the world hopes to prevent such shocks, we have to deal with the basic conditions which cause them. The only effective way to manage a crisis is to go to its roots.

Unfortunately, a succession of jarring events can so monopolize the attention and energy of governments that they neglect to deal with the persistent, underlying problems in world affairs, thus guaranteeing more shocks in the future. Effective management of crises means getting at the basic causes of the conditions we deplore, and really changing them. The challenge is extremely complex and difficult, but not hopeless. If we can muster the will to do the job, it can be done.

The necessary strength of will and sense of common purpose which is required of the industrialized democracies will not likely be forged out of any perception of immediate physical danger to ourselves, posed by the anger and frustration of the suffering peoples of the world.

The starving refugee lying in the hot dust of the Sahel can scarcely summon the strength to help himself, let alone strike out at us. If his children survive they will remember us, and with fury in their hearts, you can be sure. But that is a threat for another time. It does not frighten us into action today.

If the more powerful countries are to summon the will to respond in a more effective

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way, and with greater unity, to the problems of a chaotic world, it will be because of two things: first, a decision to give practical application to the human values which we in the West say we hold in common; and second, a better understanding of the less noble-sounding but no less compelling imperative of our own self-interest.

**Value of freedom**

What are these values that we hold in common? Surely the most basic is freedom, the freedom of individuals and of nations, the political freedom which distinguishes East from West, the freedom of the market system upon which our economies are based. The freedom of which I speak is not an abstract concept divorced from our daily lives, or reserved for patriotic speeches on national holidays; it is the very foundation and life-giving spirit of the societies which we have built in the various countries of the West.

Within our own borders we have long realized that there can be no freedom for some without freedom for all. An assault against the basic rights of my neighbour inevitably places in jeopardy my own rights, my own security and freedom. We have little trouble accepting the truth and the implications of that statement within our own borders.

We have more trouble in giving a modern answer to the very old question: Who is my neighbour? Is she the woman rummaging for food in the back streets of an Asian shanty town? Is he the man in South America in prison for leading a trade union? The people dying in Africa for lack of medical care, or clean water, are they my neighbours? What about those who are dying in the spirit in the villages of India for lack of a job, or an education, or hope? Are my neighbours the children running from the sound of gunfire in the streets of Beirut?

If we, the peoples of the North, say yes, then we will act; we will act together to keep hope alive. If we say no, then they are doomed and so are we.

The urgency of those problems constitutes one of the major reasons why this government has been eager, as has the New Democratic Party, in arranging time for this important debate on Canada's foreign policy.

I began by saying that we live in an unstable world where we no longer enjoy the comfort of being able to predict future events with a fair degree of certainty. Though political and economic instability may be most visible in the Third World, we must remember that all the great problems of the world are interrelated: the problems of East/West and North/South relations, of energy, nuclear proliferation, the Atlantic alliance, the law of the sea, the environment, refugees and sporadic outbursts of violence – and that all of these form a complex of cause and effect.

**The management of change**

There will continue to be shocks and confrontation between cultures and technology, between rich and poor, between generations, even between neighbours, as the world community attempts to live more successfully with the one predictable factor on our planet, the inevitability of constant and rapid change. That is the theme of my remarks today: the management of change, the management of the crises which change can represent.

These are troubled times for the world. Economically, the Eighties and Nineties will not have much in common with the Fifties and Sixties, when we became convinced that rapid growth was as certain as the sunrise. Now, after having been psychologically conditioned to expect constant expansion, countries have to learn to manage the experience of economic compression.

Ottawa summit  
meeting

That is another example of the instability which we must learn to manage. It will surely be one of the major preoccupations of the summit meeting here in Canada next month. In that perspective, the Ottawa summit could be more crucially important than any of its predecessors.

The impact of a summit on world problems is not immediate, largely because it is not meant to be a policy-making occasion. Its great value is that it permits the leaders of the principal industrialized democracies to share their analyses of problems, to strengthen their sense of common purpose, to assess where they can come closer together or move forward together.

Originally, the subject matter, as we know, was limited to economic issues. More recent summits have turned also to international political issues. The Ottawa summit will undoubtedly continue this trend, if only because of the preoccupations of the leaders themselves. Our meeting will derive added importance from the fact that most of the participants will be gathering together for the first time.

The international press will probably place a lot of emphasis on the ideological differences of leaders who stand on the right, or the left, or in the centre. It is true that the electorates of various countries have been sending very different signals to their respective governments. But I do not expect that we will be overly preoccupied at the summit by our differences; I think that we will be trying to chart a common course, whether on North/South questions, on approaches to East/West relations, or on international trade, for example. We shall be trying to identify the broad areas where our countries can proceed together towards shared goals, transcending the differences among our national policies.

All of the summit participants know that the world looks to them for leadership. From the Third World, the look will be skeptical. But I believe leadership is emerging, and that it will be sensitive to the priorities of our times. The test of the summit, therefore, should not be whether we come out of the meeting with specific decisions. The true test will be whether all summit participants believe that we are defining together the best approaches to the great issues of the day, based on the objectives and values which we share in common.

This summit will not only be one of the most difficult ever held, but will also be intentionally different. It is designed to be relatively unstructured, so as to give leaders the maximum opportunity to discuss the broad themes of crisis and opportunity, and how both can be effectively managed.

At Venice last year we agreed that we had to get back to these basic issues of international life, so as to strengthen our sense of common purpose. We are

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attempting, therefore, to free ourselves from a set agenda this year. It is for the same reason that the meetings are being held in the relative seclusion of Montebello.

### Economic instability

The most fundamental problems we are up against at the international level are tied up with the instability of our economic and political environment. And the management of the various economies of the industrialized world is not the least of those problems.

Right now, the western industrialized nations must cope with slow rates of growth, high levels of unemployment and rampant inflation. On top of that, due to the variation in the exchange markets, in recent weeks the European currencies suffered unprecedented devaluations as compared with the American dollar.

That devaluation of European currencies, coupled with the over-all increase in interest rates, adversely affects the economic growth of several countries which will take part in the summit. It is now feared that the expected economic upturn may be delayed at least until early 1982.

Certain participants in the summit, including Canada, are worried about the negative international spin-offs of the American domestic policy and about its consequences on interest rates for instance. The role of the summit is to ensure that the various national policies aimed at common objectives are not incompatible and counter-productive. Any action by a country must be undertaken while keeping in mind its impact on other nations. That implies first an awareness of the economic and political situation of the partners and then a decision to co-ordinate the efforts so as to minimize the conflicts and the negative spin-offs.

### East/West relations

Another source of great instability is the state of East/West relations. Here there is no denying some basic facts. The Soviet Union has invaded Afghanistan, implicitly threatening all the countries of Western Asia and ignoring the call of the Third World to get out. In addition, there is no denying that the Soviet Union has both expanded its military presence in the oceans of the world and increased dramatically the weaponry which is arrayed against the West.

These challenges constitute another more traditional form of crisis to be managed. Western countries must develop the means to take a united stand, so that in the event of a direct threat, there will be a swift and concerted response, in the defence of our own interest and the interests of those countries which look to us for strength and support.

Personally, I believe that the good sense of Soviet leaders will prevail. I believe they will not feel themselves so threatened by events that they have to respond to the challenge of change by the force of arms. We all watch the crisis in Poland. The Soviet Union should know that recourse to arms is a losing game, for them and for all the world.

That being said, unfortunately we must act in the full knowledge that we are living in a dangerous world. Our security and that of the western alliance must rest on reality

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and be credible in our own eyes and in those of others. Experience over the past five years has shown the fragility of the *détente* as a basis for East/West relations. But I believe that the events in the coming months and years will determine what will be the next phase of the East/West relations. I think that all the countries involved recognize that we all have a stake in stabilizing those relations, particularly the southern nations which ought to be kept clear of the tensions between the eastern and the western worlds. But the U.S.S.R. is a super-power which claims the right to be heard on the same terms as its rival on the problems which affect any region of the world. The Russians claim that right for reasons of national interest but also, obviously, for reasons of an ideological nature. Consequently there is a potential element of rivalry among the super-powers in every troubled area of the developing nations.

One of the shortcomings of *détente* is, paradoxically, that it was conceived in a relatively balanced and stable European context. Even though this concept was firmly implanted in Europe, its value had never been fully tested outside the continent. Now it has become obvious that this concept is even harder to implement outside Europe. More serious still, the tensions arising from the failure of *détente* in Third World countries have had an impact on the main scene of the action between East and West, namely Europe. It has become clear that East/West relations cannot follow certain rules in some areas of the world and totally different rules elsewhere.

Is there no way out? There are some conditions more conducive to improved East/West relations that come to mind. The role of super-powers cannot be denied, but it must not be exclusive. To survive, *détente* must be recognized as indivisible, yet it is a fact that it is interpreted differently in the western and in the eastern allied countries, as well as the developing and non-aligned countries, which, of course, has been a constant source of misunderstanding. The policy to be followed is to refuse to involve developing countries in the military rivalry between East and West, as this would only aggravate tensions in this no-win situation in which neither North nor South would win.

It is in the best interests of the Third World that developing countries not become involved in the competition between East and West. That is exactly what Tito and Nehru were trying to achieve through non-alignment, and we can only hope that the movement of non-aligned countries will return to its basic philosophy. Western countries must re-examine their relations with the U.S.S.R. in order to promote stability throughout the world. A strong military alliance is essential to the achievement of this goal.

We must also recognize that a good *sine qua non* condition of stability would be a basic agreement between the super-powers. In this respect, the super-powers must reactivate the best arrangements between the United States and the U.S.S.R. of the early '70s, when the "red phones" were installed and when the world could rely on a basic compatibility of interests between the two countries.

We will also witness an increased number of crises which, should the worst come to the worst, could degenerate into an all-out confrontation between the super-powers.

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Basic  
compatibility  
of interests

Moreover it seems, that a large proportion of these crises will arise in the undeveloped areas of the world, where the West has provided no set of arrangements to protect its own interests such as those between North America and Japan or Western Europe. We would be well advised, therefore, to ascertain what are the means at our disposal to meet crises everywhere and especially in Third World countries, where the interest of the western world would be at stake.

As far as Europe, the principal theatre of confrontation between East and West, is concerned, we are in a position today to reply to this question with more confidence than we were a year ago. This is not due so much to a lack of tension in Europe, but rather to the fact that at least the political consultation process with the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) allies has greatly improved to meet the challenges of the future. The willingness of the allies to develop a concerted strategy to deal with East/West relations in Europe has increased. The policy of reinforcing NATO defence preparedness, while proposing again to the Soviet Union to negotiate the arms-limitation agreements, is supported by the whole Organization, as confirmed by a recent meeting of NATO ministers. Thus, NATO remains an indispensable instrument to the maintenance of cohesion and strength which ensure stability and balance in Europe, which is clearly in the interest of the West. And the Soviet Union, in spite of its open criticism of the Organization, would undoubtedly concede that stability and balance in Europe rank among its higher priorities.

It is more difficult to feel confident about emergency arrangements made for situations that arise outside Europe. Neither East nor West are on their own territory there. The rules of the game have not been established. While a few firm lines have been drawn, such as in the Gulf area, the situation remains ambiguous, and this ambiguity can be dangerous. Western leaders must continue to ask themselves what is the best way to protect western interests in these areas while respecting the sovereignty of the countries involved. East and West must try to redefine a mutually acceptable code of behaviour for international relationships, but before this can be done, an answer must be found to the crisis in Afghanistan, whose invasion goes against everything that the western world as well as the Third World considers acceptable.

#### Arms limitation

The Ottawa summit should provide the opportunity for western leaders to bring into line their general views on this matter. This is undeniably a concern which should come foremost on the agenda of any meeting on international affairs. The prospect of a new arms race when billions of people are starving to death is truly shocking. If we decided to use for peaceful purposes the amounts we spend in two weeks for military purposes, we could provide drinking water and basic health care to the population of the entire world. However, people feel the need for even more protection, and an increase in our military spending to offset the increased amounts allocated to armaments by the U.S.S.R. seems inevitable for the moment. It is up to the western world to find an answer to this serious problem, if possible in consultation with the Soviet Union.

Moreover, SALT (Strategic Arms-Limitation Talks) negotiations should resume as soon as both parties have enough confidence in each other to conduct such talks

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effectively, and I must say that the sooner, the better. Putting an end to the nuclear arms race involves tremendous difficulties. However, the government of Canada still believes that as discouraging as these difficulties might be and as small as any immediate chance of progress might seem, the super-powers must be urged to reflect with all due gravity on the consequences of a resumption of nuclear escalation. The government still firmly believes that the nuclear arms race must be stopped and reversed, and that a new balance must be sought to increasingly lower arms levels. The stifling strategy which I suggested at the first special session of the UN on disarmament in 1978 remains valid in this regard. Nothing has occurred in the meantime to weaken my convictions on this point.

The Canadian nuclear safety policy, revised in 1974 and 1976, sets high standards. However, we apply it pragmatically in a spirit of respect for the sovereignty and sensibilities of our partners in the nuclear field. We shall continue to refine this policy so as to develop an effective national system of non-proliferation and guarantee as much as possible that Canadian nuclear exports do not contribute to nuclear proliferation.

North/South  
tensions

I have spoken about the global macro-economic situation, which affects all our lives, and about the decline in the state of East/West relations, which also affects us all. Less understood is the potential impact of North/South tensions on Canada and other industrialized countries and the need to give priority to the management of that latent crisis.

The first step should be to understand what we mean when we refer to the North and to the South. One can legitimately question whether there is a distinct North and a distinct South in every sense. Within the Third World there are as many differences as in the world itself. From the outset it needs to be emphasized that the South is not a homogeneous group of countries. It contains countries with the highest *per capita* income in the world and those with the lowest, countries with the fastest growth and those suffering negative growth, countries with the world's biggest financial surpluses and those with the greatest deficits, countries with abundant natural resources and those with none and countries with sophisticated, modern industrial economies and those with rudimentary, tribal, agricultural societies.

Yet the South is not a myth. It is a group of countries, most of them former colonies, held together by a shared perception of their status in relation to the rest of the world. In their view, solidarity among themselves is the way to exert countervailing power against the weight of the industrial North. Their vision of a new international economic order proceeds from their common view that the old rules have not permitted equal opportunity or an equitable sharing of the fruits of effort.

They are right. Justice is on their side. But even if we were not moved by justice, common sense and self-interest should tell us that if we want growing markets for our products, an orderly global economy and peace in the world, we should support reform. We should enhance the growth of opportunities of the South, selecting the best bilateral and multilateral techniques to do the job. That effort should include a process of global negotiations.

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The picture today is not one of unremitting gloom. Since the Second World War living standards in many Third World countries have improved dramatically. New economic power centres are emerging. The newly industrialized countries must find the markets and the means to permit them to develop.

Some countries of the South are growing stronger every day. Let us help them grow. But there are other countries, the poorest of the poor, which are struggling just to survive. Their situation will be critical for as far ahead as the eye can see. Eight hundred million people live on the margin of human existence. They live with overwhelming deprivation, with despair and in a state of perpetual crisis. The management of this crisis is a test of both the humanity and the credibility of governments in both North and South.

The best tool with which to help the poorest is outright aid. We have to assist them to develop the potential to feed themselves and provide for other fundamental needs like health and shelter. It is a ghastly cynicism which pretends that international co-operation cannot bring these lives closer to minimum standards of human dignity.

The overwhelming fact which governments must face is that international aid efforts are inadequate. The gap between rich and poor is not closing but opening wider, in spite of everything that has been done.

The Canadian aid record can be improved and is being improved. My government is committed to that. But I do point out that we have made a lot of progress since the Sixties. Our efforts have done a lot of good, and we have won ourselves solid friends in the world. In Canada and throughout the developed world there is a need for even greater public involvement — not just through round table discussions among the knowledgeable and already involved, but in communities and schools — so that growing public support will encourage governments to do more and to do it better.

I firmly believe that the world can and must grow enough food, provide clean water, decent housing, health care and real hope for all its people. It can be done, but it will require a gigantic effort. That is the message of the Brandt commission, reflected eloquently in the report of our parliamentary task force on North/South relations... Its message is one which the government can endorse and support.

I believe that despite bleak political prospects for greatly increased aid flows from the recession-prone North, reason will prevail and a major assault on world poverty can still be launched in earnest.

#### Trade, not aid

The need to assist the poorest is one emphasis of Canada's efforts in international co-operation. But the primary need of those countries with growing export potential is, as the slogan says, "trade, not aid". These are the countries which are arguing that the world's economic structures work inherently to their perpetual disadvantage. The process which is required to redress their grievances involves the sharing of power, not power in the classical sense of armies and empires but in the sense of access to the means of development. Gaining that kind of power means gaining access to the international institutions where the decision-making process should take greater



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account of developing countries' specific difficulties: access to international capital markets, greater security in commodity prices and access to technological skills and to markets for manufactured products.

Other specific and urgent needs will require the concentrated attention of governments as well. Energy and agriculture are priorities because of the severity of the impact of energy costs on oil-importing developing countries and because of the danger of food production not being able to keep up with population growth.

I do not expect a sudden breakthrough toward solutions in the series of important international meetings scheduled for the coming months, but I do expect a better political focus on the major priorities. I do not expect that the world's sense of crisis will be entirely eased by whatever collective response we make to the problems of development; but I do think that the basic economic causes of instability in the Third World can be successfully attacked through a co-operative international management effort.

I have spoken of Canada's role and purposes in world affairs. I have spoken particularly of the compelling need for progress in North/South relations. I have placed the issues involved in the context of the need for the international community to mobilize itself to manage crises more effectively. The summit meeting in Ottawa in July will have a particular importance in determining our collective ability to deal with the problems I have described.

Those are the issues that I wanted to discuss in the consultations I have undertaken in the last several months with the leaders of some key developing countries. I considered it important that the views of major nations such as Brazil, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Nigeria and others I have visited, be taken into account by the summit leaders. I am very conscious of the Canadian role and interest in these matters. Canada alone cannot come up with viable solutions. But we can contribute to them. Moreover, we need to strengthen relationships with a variety of countries whose interests in economic development correspond to our own. These include the countries I have visited.

For Canadians, the state of the world is of deep importance, and not least because a healthy international environment is vital to Canadian economic growth. We need stronger economic links not only with developing countries but also with our summit partners. Fundamentally, it is these economic partnerships which will stimulate the pace of development, both here and abroad.

I have not covered all aspects of our foreign policy. Many other vital Canadian concerns will be addressed by my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacGuigan), later in this debate and by other members sitting on this side of the chamber. I have sought to focus the attention of the House on those areas of crisis and of opportunity where the most basic interests of our people, as human beings and as Canadians, are at stake. I have done so with confidence that Canada will rise to the challenge of our times, and in so doing will contribute to justice, stability and peace in this still wonderful world.

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S/C

Stronger ties  
needed with  
certain countries