

STATEMENT DISCOURS

SECRETARY
OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS.

SECRÉTAIRE
D'ÉTAT AUX
AFFAIRES
EXTÉRIEURES.



STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, THE HON. MITCHELL
SHARP, ON THE SUBJECT OF TERRORISM

The Canadian Government has witnessed with mounting concern the terrorist acts in the last few years, acts which have shocked and dismayed people all over the world.

In the Government's view, no oppression is so severe that it excuses the cold blooded murder of innocent persons in the name of freedom or vengeance. The common human goals of freedom, liberty, self-fulfilment, can best be reached through positive, humanitarian means.

Acts of terrorism are of international concern and must be faced by the international community acting in concert. It has been suggested by the United Nations Secretary-General that an item on this question be added to the Agenda of the 27th session of the United Nations General Assembly. We welcome this initiative and any discussions which would help to reduce violence prevalent in the world today. Canada will work for a successful outcome of the deliberations likely to result from the Secretary-General's initiative. Nevertheless no one should minimize the difficulties nor expect that positive results will be achieved immediately.

The Government realizes that in dealing with this difficult area there will be conflicting views but international action involving intensified contact and communication with all would undoubtedly be the most effective way of dealing with terrorism since it is in the interest of all to reverse the present dangerous and tragic trend. This can only be accomplished if the question is considered in an atmosphere free of vituperative exchanges on specific issues.

In recognition of the international aspect of the terrorist problem Canada has been active in seeking broadly based agreement for practical measures to halt the challenge to international order. One of the principal Canadian initiatives has been the effort to end aerial hijacking. We have joined with the United States in putting forward ideas in the International Civil Aviation Organization to make it tougher for hijackers to get away with their criminal acts. These proposals have been under discussion by a special ICAO sub-committee in Washington. We also consider it important for states to enter into bilateral commitments or treaties to prevent hijacking or other forms of terrorism and Canada is engaged in such bilateral negotiations.

A separate proposal to draft a convention aimed at protecting diplomats from acts of terrorism has also received positive consideration by the Canadian Government. At the Conferences studying questions of Humanitarian Law in Armed Conflicts sponsored by the International Committee of the Red Cross, Canada has actively promoted the extension of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 on the Protection of War Victims to cover conflicts not recognized as being international in character. The purpose is to provide better protection of civilians against the effects of hostilities, including terrorists activities.

Although the attack on terrorism should be focussed on concerted international action, the Canadian Government has shown that it will not countenance terrorist activity in this country. Canada is endeavouring by all means possible consistent with our concepts of civil liberties to improve the effectiveness of its security measures in dealing with potential terrorist activity.