

# STATEMENT DISCOURS

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NOTES FOR A TOAST OFFERED BY THE  
HONOURABLE ALLAN J. MACEachEN,  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT  
TO OTTAWA OF THE FOREIGN  
MINISTER OF COLOMBIA,  
H.E. RODRIGO LLOREDA CAICEDO

FEBRUARY 20, 1984

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you, Doctor Lloreda, to Canada today. Your visit to our capital and the opportunity it has provided to continue discussions on matters of mutual interest is a significant catalyst in the development of closer relations between Canada and Colombia. For too long both Canada and Colombia have overlooked the wealth of possibilities for mutual cooperation. In recent years, however, the threats to peace and stability in the Caribbean and in Central America, our common membership in the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the Caribbean Development Bank have led Canada and Colombia to take a much greater interest in each other and in the political, economic and social development of the whole region. There is need for us to consult more closely.

I am pleased to note that our two countries are now realizing some of these possibilities. An excellent indicator has been the level of trade between Canada and Colombia which has doubled in the past five years. This is due in part to the complementarity of our economies and the similarities of our development priorities in such areas as mining, hydro-electricity and communications over difficult terrains. My colleague, Mr. Pepin, the Minister of External Relations, during his recent visit to Colombia announced the establishment of a \$30 million concessional financing facility to provide Colombia with access to Canadian goods in the fields of energy, transportation and communications. Canada organized a transfer of technology Fair in Bogotá in 1982 and this was so successful that we are preparing for a second exhibition in May of this year in the city of Medellín. In honour of the 15th anniversary of the Andean Pact, we have invited more than 200 businessmen from the Andean region to attend the Fair.

Doctor Lloreda and I signed today a line of credit for \$10 million to assist small and medium sized Colombian industries using Canadian equipment to become more productive in such fields as forestry and agriculture.

Our Ministers of Agriculture have also identified other opportunities for cooperation in the agricultural sector and we have only begun to identify further areas where Canada and Colombia can cooperate on projects that will serve our mutual advantage.

Equally important, we have now begun a process of close consultation on political questions. Your visit to Ottawa today is part of this process of consultations that you and I began at the United Nations General Assembly. It was furthered by the visit of my colleague, the Minister for External Relations, to Bogotá in November last year.

It is particularly opportune to have this occasion to discuss the crisis in Central America with the Foreign Minister of a Contadora country. There is a growing Canadian public interest in Central America. There is every reason for Canadians to be interested and to be concerned. Geography alone is a reason. It is the area closest to us of serious instability and East/West confrontation. We have been and continue to be appalled by the human rights violations that take place, most particularly in El Salvador and Guatemala. We are concerned about the need for economic development in order that the root causes of so many of the region's problems can be addressed.

You will not be surprised to learn that the Canadian public do not speak with one voice on Central America. For this reason, it may be useful for me to re-state briefly the Government's position on Central America.

We believe that any meaningful and enduring solution to the problems of Central America must come from the region. Accordingly, we believe that Contadora, in close and active collaboration with the five countries of Central America, offers the best opportunity to achieve a solution. We have been impressed by the remarkable efforts which have been made by Contadora and the Central American countries to build a framework of reconciliation. The Contadora meeting in Panama last month marked the first anniversary of this initiative with solid progress in approaching seemingly insurmountable political differences.

I would like to congratulate Colombia and the other Contadora members for their initiative and courage in taking on the complex and potentially explosive situation in Central America. You and your colleagues are realists. You recognize that you have not found a magic formula for the resolution of conflicts in Central America any more than you have a panacea for the underlying socio-economic causes of so many of these problems. Nevertheless, what you have achieved is not simply statements of good intentions. It is already significant that on bringing together all of the countries of Central America to discuss and agree upon a series of socio/political security objectives, you have found a consensus which over-rides deep and continuing conflict. By this means and by making the international community more sensitive to the dangers inherent to the situation of Central America, you have already forestalled a wider conflagration.

I indicated at the United Nations General Assembly that once political consensus had been reached Canada would respond sympathetically to invitations to help with

economic and perhaps other support. To enable the Canadian Government to examine more effectively those requests which may be forthcoming, I am instructing Canadian officials to consult with the three commissions of the Contadora group which will be set up in Venezuela to review social, economic and military verification requirements. I have also authorized our officials to accept an invitation to consult with the Action Committee for Socio Economic Development in Central America (CADESCA) which has been established in Mexico with a view to assessing and coordinating economic requirements of the region.

We have already agreed to increase our commitments to Central America. Canadian aid to the region has tripled for the five-year period 1982-87 to over \$100 million. Last month I announced a new component of this program which was a \$13 million line of credit for assistance in cattle and fertilizers to Nicaragua. This complements the most important program we have in Honduras - the second poorest country in the hemisphere - and the increasing levels of assistance given to Costa Rica.

It is important to recognize that the aid support given by Canada to the countries of Central America is not intended to penalize or to reward on the basis of political complexion. Such a policy would be totally inconsistent with our objective to help countries of the region to overcome those social and economic disabilities which are the cause of social, political and economic injustice.

However, where there are consistent and massive abuses of human rights, a line is drawn. In the case of El Salvador and Guatemala, our bilateral aid relations have been suspended as a result of the internal security situation and its effect on human rights and the difficulty of delivering aid programs in these countries. Our views on human rights violations were made clear in our voting last fall at the United Nations. However, purely humanitarian assistance is provided through non-governmental and international organizations to help meet the increasingly desperate needs of the victims in these countries.

For these same reasons, we have taken a lead in offering to accept refugees from the area. Last year we accepted 2,000; this year it will be 2,500. Canada has also established a special program for amnestied political prisoners from El Salvador. We have accepted 400 persons under this program, including close relatives.

In this same context, I welcome the commitment taken by the USA Administration, based on the Kissinger Commission, to address some of the basic problems of the region through economic support. In the case of El Salvador, I am encouraged by indications that the proposed conditionality of USA aid upon performance in the human rights field will stand. We are, however, concerned about the extent to which military aid is a major component of the Kissinger Proposals. In keeping with Canada's position against third party intervention in Central America and the supply of armaments to opposing factions, we oppose continued military support for anti-Sandinista insurgents just as we oppose the promotion of, and support for, armed insurgency in El Salvador and Guatemala by outside powers.

We do not believe in military solutions for Central America. Moreover, we do believe that any attempt to impose military solutions will decrease rather than promote stability in the area. Militarization engenders political polarization. The militarization of Central America, whether of the left or of the right, has the consequence of weakening those moderate indigenous political forces which, in harness with Contadora, are indispensable if national reconciliation in these countries is to be secured.

Equally indispensable will be the full cooperation of the United States and Cuba. In September, I welcomed the offer of verifiable demilitarization made earlier by President Reagan. There has been some positive reaction from Cuba and Nicaragua - but still no dialogue.

I have been talking at length about an important part of the world that I do not yet know at first hand. I am anxious to correct this omission. I am planning to visit Central America as soon as possible. I expect to learn from this visit and to have the opportunity to express more directly Canada's support for the Contadora peace initiative.

Doctor Lloreda, we have already had productive discussions and I look forward to the further development of our conversations.

May I now ask our guests to join with me in a toast - and I am not certain whether it would be more appropriate to take up the coffee cup or the wine glass - to His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Colombia.