



# Statements and Speeches

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No. 81/16

## CANADA AND THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

A Statement by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, June 16, 1981

Yesterday in the government-initiated debate, the Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau, spoke of the flash-points of crisis in international life against the backdrop of global challenges and difficulties. In my own contribution, I addressed specific foreign policy dilemmas that we face in the framework of Canadian foreign policy values. Today, on an NDP (New Democratic Party) motion, we are invited to continue the debate on Canada's international relations, with particular reference to South and Central America, and, by way of example, we are directed to consider the tragedy of El Salvador.

The countries of South and Central America all, without exception, belong to the Third World, and in a general debate on foreign affairs I believe it is incumbent upon me to advance some generalizations about our foreign policy towards the Third World as a whole.

Obviously, my response must admit both diversity and nuance. The quality of Canada's relations is not the same with small, remote islands as with large, developing countries. Neighbours have a different priority from those remote from us. We protect and cherish the special links of the Commonwealth and la Francophonie.

Even though the process of decolonization has been largely completed, many developing countries remain highly volatile. Government methods and social forms are often still in formation or are fragile. It is in the interest of democratic countries like Canada that Third World states develop freely-created institutions which correspond to the needs of their own societies and form the basis for stable government, while at the same time providing adequate protection of individual human rights.

Whatever attractions Communist ideologies may have had in the first blush of post-colonialism, they have been overtaken since then by the self-serving record of the U.S.S.R. in the developing world and the poor economic performances of most Eastern European countries. There has also been a diminution of the compulsive anti-Western sentiments which often characterized political views in the developing countries two decades ago. These trends have in fact all combined to create a more positive set of circumstances for co-operation between Third World and Western countries.

However, Canada's first principle towards the Third World is the promotion of genuine independence, non-alignment and stability. Putting it another way, I can say that we want to immunize the Third World from, rather than involve it in, East/West confrontation. As I said yesterday, our approach is to treat Third World countries on their own merits. Our goal is, in fact, a pluralistic world in which there

Principles

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would be room for the Third World objectives of independence and self-determination.

Second, we do not believe forms of government or economic systems are matters to be imposed from outside. Obviously, we will seek to explain to Third World countries why we believe as deeply as we do in free and representative institutions; but their social, economic and cultural circumstances are totally different from ours. The example of the success of our societies will of itself be the most convincing argument we can present. But short of international consensus, as in the case of Iran, or the Soviet Union over Afghanistan, or Rhodesia, we will not impede trade flows to reflect our view of their choice. In extreme cases, trade-facilitation measures may be diminished, as was the case with a developed country, South Africa, in 1977. But we have not traditionally cut off aid relations, directed as they are towards improving the standard of living of people, when governments adopt positions we do not favour.

The third principle is that we expect that governments of all countries will be vigilant in the observance of their first and fundamental obligation — to their own people. Gross violations of human rights are and must be a source of concern and action on the part of the international community. However, when considering the appropriate response, I favour action which is effective and which stands a real chance of influencing the government in question. I oppose hollow gestures and the withdrawal of mechanisms which benefit Canadians, withdrawals which will not change the minds or the practices of the offending government. Especially in cases where the momentum for democracy and human rights of the foreign government is in a progressive rather than a retrogressive direction, we must try to use private counselling and positive reinforcement rather than strident public denunciations.

Fourth, we believe that it would be inappropriate for our foreign policy to reward adventurism and interference. Countries of the Third World face desperate and formidable challenges. It is for this reason that we have withdrawn aid programs from those countries whose scarce resources are diverted to war and conquest.

These four principles may set us apart from some other developed countries, but that does not mean we cannot work with them. We will examine, for example, the invitation of the United States and Mexico to work together to promote economic development in the Caribbean and the Central America region. For our part, this task is well in hand in the Commonwealth Caribbean, and we expect that our major emphasis will continue to be on these islands.

We may well not endorse all of the foreign policy imperatives of the American — or indeed of the Mexican — government, in promoting this initiative, but we can, I am confident, find common cause in the overriding need to develop the region and therefore find ways of reconciling our differing objectives. National motivations need not be identical for a common plan of action to be established.

For too long there has been a tendency to consider Latin America and the Caribbean as a single area, ignoring the fact that it is an area made up of 39 independent countries, dependent colonies and territories where the languages spoken are English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch, in which at least 20 have enjoyed political

independence for over 150 years and all of which were at one time colonies of the great European colonial empires. Almost the only common thing about them is their colonial heritage and the fact that in many of them Spanish is the common language.

But these countries are no more like each other than are Australia and Canada. Each has its own history, its own racial mixtures, its own social development and its own economic status and potential. We must, therefore, deal with them individually.

Some will be important to us as export markets; others as sources of needed imports. Some will be sources of immigrants; others the destination of Canadian tourists. Some will be important because of their role in international affairs; others because of their need for development assistance to which we can contribute. Some will have shared political values. All have cultural traditions to which we can relate and in which we can share for the mutual benefit of our societies and our peoples.

Looked at in economic terms, these Latin states are all countries of the South. What is Canada's role in Latin America, or indeed in other parts of the world, in promoting the North/South dialogue? The government agrees with the Parliamentary Task Force on North/South Relations that Canada should base the development of Canadian policy on North/South issues on two major principles. First, the mutuality of interest of both North and South in solving global economic problems. Second, the humanitarian need to focus attention and resources on the world's poorest peoples and countries. These concepts will motivate Canada's aid programs and govern our efforts in the search for compromise.

Neither countries of the North nor those of the South constitute homogeneous groups. In spite of their diversity, the South countries draw their feeling of unity from the convictions they share and from a common perception of their position in the world. Among other things, they are convinced that the international economic system has been overly favourable to the rich countries, and that is why they are asking that the rules of the game be changed. They want the system to be more accommodating for them. The poorest among them entertain more limited ambitions: they only want to survive, to improve their lot to a certain extent, and to keep their societies intact, and that regardless of forces and situations over which they often have no control whatsoever.

We should not wonder if developing countries seek to use existing international institutions to achieve their aims. New industrialized countries, such as Brazil, are ever more active within the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Canada itself contributed to set up postwar international institutions because it looked upon them as a means of reducing its own vulnerability and opening new avenues for international co-operation.

Unfortunately, the poorest countries are the ones which will probably benefit the least from any change in the institutions or in the exchange and payment system which might result from the North/South negotiations. It is towards those poorest countries — Haiti, Honduras and Guyana — that Canada will continue to direct its bilateral aid. In fact, our bilateral public aid to development has always been con-

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Priority  
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centrated on low-income developing nations. During the 1970s, that concentration accounted for an average of 75 per cent of our funds earmarked for public aid to development. Canada ranks first among industrialized nations in terms of percentage of aid to development which it gives to the poorest countries. The main objective of the Canadian program of co-operation and development is to support the efforts which the developing nations are themselves making to meet the needs of their own people. To that end, the bilateral program will be focused on three priority sectors: agriculture, energy, and human resources development. It is in those three sectors that Canada's resources are best suited to the needs of developing countries. We will be giving priority treatment to those sectors in the coming years.

As far as Canada is concerned, our commitment to development assistance is now well entrenched. Let me simply reiterate the government's policy to allocate to official development assistance 0.5 per cent of our gross national product by 1985 and to do our utmost to achieve the international target of 0.7 per cent by 1990.

As some members well know, I take particular interest in promoting consultations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), church leaders and business representatives, and I have been impressed by their strong moral and intellectual commitment to the over-all Canadian effort in favour of Third World development. I would like to pay tribute to the impressive work that is carried out by NGOs and the church groups in Latin America, and I would like to repeat the strong commitment of this government to continue supporting financially the initiatives taken by private citizens in this country.

#### Refugee problem

I want just to mention a serious issue which is having an adverse impact on the economic and social development prospects of many developing countries. I refer to the international refugee situation, the dimensions of which are expanding at an alarming rate.

There are now some ten million refugees in different parts of the world and many more millions of internally displaced persons. The situation in Africa, which has witnessed a quintupling of its refugee population in the past few years, is of particular concern and led to the convening of the conference in Geneva in April, in which I participated, on the subject of international assistance to refugees in Africa. At that conference, Canada pledged, in this year alone, a \$22-million contribution towards the longer-term requirements of \$1 billion to assist in humanitarian relief, and local reinstallation and possibly eventual repatriation of the five million refugees in question.

There are also major unresolved refugee situations in Central Asia, in Southeast Asia and in Latin America. These situations, apart from the grave humanitarian problems for the refugees involved, impose economic, social and political burdens on the countries providing asylum which tend to undermine the stability of the countries and regions affected. It is for this reason that Canada, while contributing in a major way to the humanitarian relief effort, has led the international efforts at the United Nations' General Assembly, the UN High Commission for Refugees, the UN Commission on Human Rights, and within the economic summits to address the funda-

mental political and human rights problems which underlie most of the situations of massive exodus.

My department has further initiatives under consideration. I want to emphasize in particular my pleasure at the agreement of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan to serve as special rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of the relationship of massive exoduses and human rights abuses. This particular exercise is the result of a Canadian initiative, and during my visit to Geneva in April, I assured the Prince of Canada's strongest support for his sensitive mission.

I am pleased that my colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, Mr. Axworthy, will be able to participate in this debate today, elaborating on his department's concern over the question of resettlement of refugees from the Latin American region.

I spoke yesterday of the over-all importance to Canada of its trading relationships and the growth of trade with the Third World. Latin America provides a dramatic illustration: in 1979, five of our top 25 trading partners were developing countries in the Western hemisphere.

In development assistance terms, in Central America, despite the absence of close political ties, Canada has recognized the pressing needs of the region and has been a leading aid donor, providing more than \$60 million in bilateral aid since 1972. In terms of concentration, Honduras and El Salvador, as the poorest of the area, have received the largest portion of the funding.

El Salvador

I should like finally to deal with that illustrative part of the motion which calls on the government "to initiate steps aimed at establishing a negotiated settlement of the tragic civil war in El Salvador".

Canada's links with El Salvador in terms of historic, linguistic, cultural, commercial and other ties, are limited in comparison to those of other countries in the world or, indeed, in the Western hemisphere. There are only 40 Canadians resident in that country and immigration has been about 100 per year. Canadian investments total less than \$10 million and exports in 1980 were only \$15 million. Our major involvement is in the aid field and even here all new planning has had to be halted because of the violence.

Although our direct links with El Salvador have historically not been great, this does not mean that Canada is not concerned at developments in El Salvador, in particular at the high level of violence and the continuing disregard for human rights which characterize the political scene. In dealing with these issues, our policy has been clear and consistent.

Canada's opposition to the supply of arms to competing forces in El Salvador was spelled out in my speech in the House of March 9. Canada's abhorrence of human rights violations has been and continues to be emphasized both in bilateral contacts and in multilateral forums. We also continue to believe that a political solution

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should be sought for El Salvador.

President Duarte of El Salvador has called elections for a constituent assembly for 1982. He has invited all political parties to register for the elections, including extremist groups willing to lay down their arms. He has indicated a willingness to open a dialogue with the left on the election process and the monitoring of it. He has also made clear that he would not negotiate the formation of a non-elected coalition government and has said that he would not accept mediation offers by third parties, whether from regional states such as Venezuela and Mexico or from the Socialist International, which is committed to aiding the Democratic Revolutionary Front, the FDR.

The leader of the NDP has said that he shares the feeling of the FDR that the elections proposed by the junta would be a travesty of democracy in current circumstances, not a viable political solution to the conflict. This view is not shared by many of Canada's friends in the area, such as Venezuela and Costa Rica.

We agree that the obstacles to holding elections are formidable. After all, El Salvador has no tradition of democratic rule and is beset by violent armed opposition from extremists of both left and right, none of whom has any real interest in seeing the implantation of liberal democracy.

It should also be recognized that there are many within the power structure of El Salvador, particularly in the security forces, who are not happy with the prospect of elections. President Duarte has made great progress in obtaining their agreement to abide by the will of the population as expressed in the elections called for 1982 and 1983. There is no doubt, however, that if the President were forced into negotiating the formation of a non-elected coalition government or some other form of power-sharing as advocated by the FDR and the leader of the NDP, he could well be overthrown and the prospects for the institution of true democracy spoiled.

President Duarte's reluctance to be drawn into negotiations with the left are also understandable in the light of information contained in documents captured in April. The FDR has not denied the authenticity of these documents, which spell out the objectives of the left in negotiations as follows: first, to draw out the conflict, which is going badly for the revolutionary forces; second, to drive a wedge between the Christian Democratic Party of President Duarte and the armed forces; third, to enhance the image of the left as a peacemaker; and fourth, to seek to expose the Christian Democratic Party as a facade for a military-controlled government.

**Fair elections  
feasible**

However, Canada refuses to dismiss out of hand the feasibility of holding fair elections, as the leader of the NDP does. Elections were possible in Zimbabwe in similarly difficult circumstances. President Duarte is on public record as saying that the Organization of American States (OAS) would be welcome to monitor them. His words as quoted in the March 6 edition of *The New York Times* are:

"We are going to request from the Organization of American States not only to send us a protocol mission, but to send us contingents from all of the Americas to come

and inspect, and to really make these free elections."

As I said recently before the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, if requested, and if we believed we could be of assistance, we would certainly be prepared to consider participating in such a mission.

In our view, Duarte has earned the right to be given a chance to bring about a political solution in the most democratic of manners — through free elections. A founder of the Christian Democratic Party, he has fought all of his life for democracy. Together with the present leader of the FDR, Guillermo Ungo, he waged and won the 1972 election campaign in his country. This victory was blocked by the military and Duarte was jailed, beaten and tortured. Exiled to Venezuela, he was one of the leaders of the opposition movement whose efforts eventually led to the overthrow of President Romero in October 1979. He returned to his native land only 13 days after the revolution and was appointed to government in March 1980, becoming President in December, assuming the position he had rightfully won in 1972.

It is ironic that the FDR is pressing Duarte to negotiate with them, presumably to enter into a form of power-sharing in advance of the people's support in the election, all in the name of democracy.

It is my belief that many men and women of goodwill made a tragic miscalculation in late 1979 and early 1980. They thought that the same circumstances prevailed in El Salvador as had prevailed in Nicaragua before the overthrow of Somoza. They gambled that the armed leftist groups would win, ignoring the fact that the repressive regime of General Romero had already been overthrown. These men and women of essentially moderate persuasion, many of whom are represented in the FDR — people who, as the leader of the NDP said earlier, would be members of all political parties in Canada if they were here — are now stranded with their extremist bedfellows.

The FDR, if it is really interested in seeing democracy introduced into El Salvador and is not just a front for armed Marxist revolutionary groups, has a responsibility to join with the Duarte government to ensure that the elections scheduled to be held in a scant nine months are a success.

The leader of the NDP, Mr. Broadbent, has also, I believe, a responsibility in this regard. Most of his proposed courses of action are based on a negotiated settlement, which is the cause of the revolutionaries. By supporting the revolutionary forces in their desire to share power before the holding of elections, he could contribute to the prolongation of the suffering in that country and thereby impede the political solution which all members in this House support. To use his own words, he adds a "veneer of respectability" to the rebel position.

Finally, what is our responsibility as the government? It is not to attempt to arrogate to ourselves, from the outside, the right to resolve El Salvador's problems and, even more, the form of their resolution. It is rather to be modest enough to allow the people of El Salvador to decide their own future through the processes of the ballot box. That may not lead to political power for the socialist opposition in El Salvador,

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to which the Socialist International and their distinguished investigator are committed, but regardless of the falling of political chips, I believe it is the right, and certainly it is the democratic, course.

El Salvador is a human tragedy. It is ours to express our fellow-feeling, to offer aid, to encourage a solution which corresponds to the wishes and needs of the people and to rebuke perpetrators of acts of criminal terrorism. It is not ours to assume the *principal role in solving the crisis*. That way would lie another tragedy, our own. Third World governments are not prepared to admit without qualification that their tragedies are ours. Modesty, patience and a sense of our own limitations are sometimes the most difficult virtues to practise, but I commend them to the leader of the NDP and to my colleagues. Genuine independence for the Third World has to mean independence even from us. Our own independence is too precious for us to do violence to that of others. This is the course of action we intend to continue to urge upon all governments.

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