

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

Secrétaire
d'État aux
Affaires
extérieures

91/26

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS

BY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA MCDUGALL,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,

TO MEMBERS OF THE

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CANADIAN STUDIES

OTTAWA, Ontario
May 30, 1991

I am very pleased to welcome you to Canada. As knowledgeable students of Canada from around the world, you are able to project back to Canadians a very objective view of the reality of Canada, its values, and its place in international affairs. In this there is a certain irony, but I can assure you that your views are most welcome and appreciated.

In fact, I was pleased to learn that, inspired by the all-European Conference on Canadian Studies held in The Hague last year, the Royal Society of Canada will be organizing a "World Forum on Canada" to take place in Ottawa in the fall of 1992. This should provide an exciting and informative venue, as part of the celebrations of Canada's 125th birthday.

Canada today, along with other members of the international community, is riding a roller coaster of hope, fear and uncertainty over the future shape of our world.

Is this the dawn of a new era of international peace and security, prosperity and justice? Or is it the beginning of a spiral towards inter-ethnic, inter-communal intolerance, regional and global instability, and a more violent and impoverished world?

The keys to the world's future would appear to lie in two directly related areas -- *political stability* and *broad economic progress*. These are also the keys to Canada's future, and I will address the domestic dimension in somewhat more detail later in my remarks.

In many fundamental ways, the final decade of the twentieth century resembles the 1940s. Unfortunately, in the 1940s the vision of effective collective security and global political co-operation was swept away by competing ideologies and deep-seated international distrust that produced the Cold War.

Without a shared vision of the world order, effective international co-operation and effective multilateralism were placed in suspended animation for generations.

In areas where there was even a partially shared vision of the world order -- in the economic sphere -- multilateral efforts were much more effective. The liberal trading principles enshrined in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) served us all well for many years, even though they were not shared globally.

Their validity has been confirmed over time as more and more members of the international community agree to accept the disciplines and codes of the GATT.

Today, as the Cold War recedes, we have the opportunity to resurrect the hopes and the vision of our predecessors. The risks and challenges we face are equally great, but we now have

the political capacities to try once again to introduce effective multilateralism.

The world has changed from 50 years ago. In the world of the 1990s, political and economic power is increasingly more diffuse. There is now really only one fully integrated superpower with combined political, military and economic might, and it is neither interested in nor capable of unilaterally imposing its will on the world community.

The freer flow of information and ideas has led to a greater belief in democracy and the respect for human rights. The closed society, a distinguishing characteristic of the 1940s and of the Cold War, should become obsolete in the 1990s.

The information and technological revolution has also led to a growing globalization of firms and markets, and increased competition. The 1980s have seen the rise of regional trading arrangements which have centred around the "triad" of the European Community, Japan and the United States.

Welcome or not, international political and economic issues are increasingly intruding on the national agendas of sovereign states.

As national boundaries decline in importance, global problems requiring global solutions increase. Population growth and mass migration, the trade in illicit drugs, terrorism, environmental degradation and illiteracy are only a few of the issues which must be dealt with through effective international co-operation.

But overhanging the international drive to address these issues, in fact often exacerbating their severity, are continuing threats to regional and global security. The present international security environment is unstable and complex. We need to strengthen both regional and global security.

The issues of stability and security are not unrelated. In fact, co-operative regional security structures in the 1990s must address both the symptoms and underlying causes of political and economic instability.

Co-operative security must be more than a product of military might. It must be the result of comprehensive dialogue and planning internationally, regionally and bilaterally.

In the critical region of Europe, Canada has long been active in strengthening regional dialogue and co-operation.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, it is imperative that there be greater trust and transparency in the Middle East if the region is to find a lasting peace.

Among the diverse countries of Asia-Pacific, we are beginning to see more regular patterns of dialogue about security issues.

In Africa and Latin America we would like to see a similar strengthening of regional security structures.

On a global basis, an opportunity exists to develop greater respect for the rule of law and the principles of collective security articulated at the creation of the UN in San Francisco in 1945.

We already have the essential global framework for a new international order -- the United Nations. Our challenge is to strengthen that framework.

More effective use of the UN Charter, a strengthened role for the Secretary General, improved peacemaking and peacekeeping capabilities and more effective emergency humanitarian mechanisms would all help to strengthen the system.

We must also press for firm new commitments on non-proliferation and conventional arms transfers as essential components of a more secure and peaceful international order.

Surely the world community has taken some lessons from the insanity of the Gulf War!

Helping to build a peaceful and stable new international order will require even more than regional and global security. We must also maintain momentum in the area of economic co-operation. One of the ironies of present events in a world where political and security co-operation appear to be growing is the international community's declining commitment to multilateral economic arrangements.

I have already referred to the emergence of regional trading arrangements throughout the 1980s. Canada recognizes the benefits of such arrangements -- hence our involvement in the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and now in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiations.

However, we have made it clear that the growth of regional trading arrangements must be built upon the principles of the GATT and complement, not replace, the multilateral system of trade and payments.

I have indicated that there is a link between economic development, political stability and security. All countries must share in the world's bounty -- no one should be bypassed or excluded from progress and prosperity.

Here in Canada, our Government has always recognized the importance of sound economics as a basis for social and political stability. We have taken tough -- often unpopular -- decisions to ensure Canada's future in this regard. Increased trade liberalization, tax reform, privatization, deregulation and reduced government spending are at the heart of our economic agenda.

Also fundamental to our agenda is the development of our human resources, either through basic education, skills updating or re-training. We have introduced a number of major new programs in this area, and the recent speech from the throne sounded the call for greater federal-provincial co-operation in this area. There is also an opportunity here for greater international co-operation.

With this objective in mind, I have asked my department to plan a round table this fall to discuss a number of the programs which are being run by the European Community (EC), and what Canada might learn from these programs.

EC efforts to enhance student mobility, joint research, and linguistic skills are of particular interest. Another area of both national interest and international co-operation is the environment. Our natural habitat knows no boundaries, and we need concerted global action on matters such as ozone depletion, climate change, deforestation and biodiversity.

Basic to all of these actions are the protection and promotion of particularly Canadian values -- values that Canadians have projected abroad for over half a century:

- ♦ our support to developing countries;
- ♦ our unparalleled compassion towards the world's refugees;
- ♦ our humanitarian assistance to nations in need and areas in crisis; and
- ♦ our support for democratic development, human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world.

These have long been Canada's hallmarks and they must be the basis for any new system of international order.

Canada has often been looked upon as a model for ethnic diversity, tolerance and prosperity amongst the world's nations. So I am sure that you must share the confusion of many Canadians who see their country once again going through a period of self-doubt and constitutional crisis.

I believe what is required to understand the situation in 1991 is *perspective* -- not only geographical, which you possess living outside the country, but also historical.

As many of you know, Canada went through much of the same turmoil between 1864 and 1867, before the so-called "Fathers of Confederation" hammered out a deal. Canada's history since then has been characterized by numerous attempts to re-configure and re-constitute that original arrangement.

Will the passion in Quebec following the failure of the Meech Lake Accord result finally in the break-up of Canada? I think not. Even in Quebec, the polling trends indicate that the most hardened attitudes are beginning to soften, and that some form of Canadian compromise can be achieved.

Outside of Quebec, it must be understood that all premiers in 1987 supported the principles of Meech Lake, and even when the process failed in June 1990, an overwhelming majority of Canadians and legislatures still favoured the adoption of the Accord.

In typical Canadian style, we sent out an avalanche of commissions and task forces to see what went wrong -- in both process and content.

Recently, my predecessor in this portfolio, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, was given special responsibility for constitutional affairs and national unity, and after only a month he has begun to turn the tide of national opinion towards constructive dialogue and solutions.

We are an interesting bunch, but as students of this country you must realize that we are not crazy.

I can assure you that Canadians will opt for practical, equitable and far-reaching constitutional solutions which will allow this country to continue to develop and prosper and play an active and effective role in the world of the 1990s and beyond.

As students of Canada, I know that you are also excellent teachers, and I urge you during your time in our country to share your views with ordinary Canadians so that they can benefit from your wisdom and objectivity.

Canada is a great country and I thank you for your interest and for your assistance in helping us to plan our course for the future.