



# Statements and Speeches



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## CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY: A 1978 PERSPECTIVE

A Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, to the Empire Club, Toronto, March 2, 1978.

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It is very difficult on an occasion such as this to respond to the suggestion that I talk about Canadian foreign policy in 1978 because there are so many facets to the topic. In the time that is allotted to me it would be quite impossible to do justice to all the matters I should wish to discuss with you and in which you may very well have an interest. Indeed, one of the problems also is that the items I wish to highlight in this overview may not necessarily be those with which you have the greatest concern or the greatest interest. But, if that should turn out to be the case, I would ask your forgiveness. Incidentally, if at any time there are matters relating to foreign policy about which members of the audience would wish to obtain additional information, I should be more than happy to provide it.

What I should like to do today is to give you some impressions, drawn from my own experience in public life, and more particularly as Secretary of State, on the condition of the world today, and also on those things I feel Canada can do something about.

I suppose no audience is more aware than this one that, from the immediate post-Second World War period up until fairly recent times, the preoccupation of almost anyone who was interested in international affairs was the so-called East-West confrontation or the relationship between the Soviet Union and its client states, as they may be called, and the United States and its Western allies on the other side. For a very long time, certainly throughout the Fifties and well into the Sixties, this was the principal concern of most people who had more than passing interest in international affairs. Of course, it remains in many cases a source of concern today.

However, in the last part of the Sixties and throughout the Seventies, we have seen a new and complex dimension added to the world situation. This is described as the "North-South dialogue" — the relation between the developed countries from principally the northern part of the globe and the developing, or poorer, countries, located by in large in the southern part of the globe. I hope to be able to have time to touch on that in more detail in a few moments, but let me simply say here that, as a result of this new dimension, we could very well be said to have "boxed the compass", if I can use a "down-East" expression. We now have a situation in which, in addition to being concerned about those tensions and the efforts to relieve those tensions that exist between East and West, we have a new set of tensions — and they pose a new kind of challenge, particularly to the developed world, through the North-South dialogue.

In each one of the quadrants of that circle there are innumerable major and minor

problems that preoccupy someone who has responsibility in the foreign affairs field. Just to mention a few, there is, of course, the Middle East and its enormous potential for world peace and security, not only in the political sense but also, as we have learnt since the oil embargo, in the economic sense. Then there is southern Africa, with the issues of *apartheid* within South Africa itself, and the future of Rhodesia and Namibia. There is the Horn of Africa, which is causing very great concern to a great many knowledgeable people these days. (One could almost say that within all of the countries of Africa there is still a certain lack of stability, which is creating minor and major tensions.)

The United Nations embraces the whole of that circle and is coming under increasing challenge today both from its enemies and, since I have been one of its critics on occasion, from its friends. Let me emphasize that Canada continues to regard the United Nations as an essential instrument that must be retained as an effective means for the resolution of any number of international problems. But there is concern that the United Nations — and particularly certain elements of it — may be losing their efficacy. Canada is committed, and certainly I have undertaken it as a personal commitment, to seek to revitalize some of those elements in the United Nations that ought to be employed more effectively. Regrettably, some UN activities (and I'm thinking of the General Assembly) have deteriorated in recent years into what is often a debating society, which does not, in fact, produce very much by way of really significant results.

But the United Nations remains important to Canada because we believe it is the focal point for two debates that are either going on at the present time or about to begin in the near future. One is disarmament, on which there will be a special session of the United Nations beginning in May of this year. We are seeking to determine what is the most effective and progressive role that Canada can play to bring the world to a realization that the current arms race, not only in nuclear weapons but in defensive armaments as well, is not only something that has an enormous destabilizing effect but also tends to cause us to distort our priorities. Consider the expenditures we are making necessarily now on armaments, when, in fact, we ought to be spending a great deal more in terms of our developmental assistance and other forms of positive contributions to the developing world and to the search for greater peace and stability in the universe. In our own country, for example — just to show you the extent to which there is this distortion —, even though it is generally conceded that we ought to be perhaps spending more than at present on defence, the fact is that our expenditures within Canada, a relatively modest-sized country, on defence are four to five times what they are on foreign aid and related commitments. This gives you some idea of what it is like when you extend those figures out to embrace the world community. If we could reach the point where we could get a reasonable and assured level of disarmament, what we would be able to do with our own domestic economy and the economies of the developing world staggers the imagination. This is an effort we in Canada ought to continue and ought to accelerate.

The other side of the disarmament question involves nuclear technology. The months and the years immediately ahead are going to be of the utmost importance in terms of whether we can or cannot, to fall back on a stock expression, "put the genie back in

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the bottle". Whether we can achieve some rational way in which the potential — the peaceful potential — of nuclear energy can be employed while, at the same time, equally strong potential for destruction can be minimized. I merely mention this briefly to illustrate the diversity and the complexity of the issues with which we have to cope in trying to determine what Canadian foreign policy ought to be.

So let me, then, asking that question rhetorically, proceed to try to give you some ideas as to what I think it ought to be. Basically, I regard Canada's foreign policy as having its roots in advancing and improving our own national interests. I don't make any apologies for that particular approach, because it seems to me that one can, against that kind of yardstick, assess almost any course of action you would wish to take. I don't use the word "national interest" in any narrow or selfish or even wholly economic sense. What I think it is important for me to say is that Canada's national interest is going to be advanced much better, much more rapidly, much more securely, if there is peace and stability in the world. Almost any initiative that we would wish to undertake as Canadians, as the Canadian Government, as the Canadian people, in the international sphere can, in fact, be defended against that yardstick.

But, looking at it in a more narrow sense, we should have a foreign policy that is designed to help us achieve the level of economic stability and security that is essential for our further progress. One has to look at some rather dramatic figures that aren't stated often enough perhaps but, I think, signal clearly where a good deal of the emphasis must go in terms of our activities and in terms of how we assign our resources. If one takes the United States, the European Economic Community and Japan (two countries and a grouping of countries), those three together account for over 85 per cent of all of Canada's external trade. So, of the 140-odd countries in the United Nations, if one is looking at it strictly from the perspective of advancing the Canadian national interest, it becomes perfectly obvious that the essential element must be the closest-possible links and co-operation with Japan, with the United States and with the European Economic Community.

If one takes that three-way grouping and separates it still further, the fact is that better than 60 per cent is with the United States. You have a situation where not only is the United States our neighbour in the geographic sense — it is also the major customer for our products and (I don't think there is any question about this) the most important country in terms of whether our economy will move forward or not. I believe (and, indeed, the Government believes) that the maintenance and the enhancement of our relations with the United States must take a primary priority. It is, therefore, the centrepiece, as it were, of our foreign policy.

Now that does not mean that we are going to come closer to the United States — or that, indeed, we are going to be engulfed by them or that we are going to seek to have some kind of "continentalism" in North America. Because the European Community is also tremendously important, not only in economic terms but also in terms of the general political posture that we wish to take — an outward-looking posture in the world. That is why we have developed the "Third Option". I do not wish to become academic or to go to any great lengths as to what the components of the Third Option actually are, but I think it is evident that we have had a considerable degree of

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success in terms of the political relations that we have been able to establish with the European Economic Community. Indeed, Mr Roy Jenkins, the current President of the Community, is going to be visiting Canada next week and I shall be having discussions with him, as will the Prime Minister. We have invited the Premier of Ontario and other political leaders across the country at the provincial level to sit and talk with him as well, because we place a great deal of importance, and I do personally, upon the continuation and expansion and strengthening of our links with the Community. I think that is only fair, too, to add that it is too early yet to determine whether or not some of the goals of the Third Option, as reflected in the "contractual link" with Europe, are going to be successful. Almost simultaneously with the development of the contractual link came the oil crisis and everything that flowed from that dramatic event. The economies of Europe at the moment, or the countries making up the Community, are enormously vulnerable, as we have seen as recently as this morning in the news. Therefore this is not the time when it is likely that we can substantially increase our exports or our levels of trade with the Community.

However, that does not mean that we need to be equally retarded in our approach to the Community on the political level. In the last few months, I have had the satisfaction, for example, of being able to negotiate with the European Community a nuclear-safeguards arrangement that permitted the resumption of our [supply of] Canadian uranium to Europe under what is the tightest safeguards regime in the world. I have also been able to co-operate with France, Britain, and along with Germany, in efforts related to the whole Southern Africa situation. We have what I might describe, in the quite appropriate sense of the phrase, as a foot in both camps, and I believe this is appropriate for Canada and I believe it is what Canadians want.

So far as Japan is concerned, I can say almost the same thing about our prospects for enhancing our relations with Japan in the economic sphere. That country, as I think many of you will know, is, of course, also going through some very difficult economic times and its productivity is slack. Industrial capacity is not being fully employed and it is highly unlikely that we are going to see any dramatic or immediate upsurge in the level of our trade with Japan. But, nevertheless, during my recent visit to Japan I think we achieved a good deal more, not only in our discussions with the Japanese but also in our discussions among ourselves, with businessmen like Mr Gardner (whom I see here today), one of which occurred as recently as last night as to what approach we ought to take to enhance our economic relations — not only with Japan, by the way, but with China and the whole of Southeast Asia....

In the political sphere, I believe we can call upon support from Japan when there are issues in the international field about which we feel strongly or where we wish to make an impact or to make our views known. For example, when the Soviet satellite crashed over Northern Canada, Japan was one of the first countries to come out in support of the Canadian position and I had a call from the Japanese Ambassador in Ottawa just the day before yesterday indicating that the Diet in Tokyo had passed a resolution that was fully consistent with the position Canada has taken with regard to objects in outer space. These kinds of contact may not always produce visible and evident results immediately or after a visit takes place, but I am satisfied that in those two areas — the Community and Japan — and in the United States our relations are

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now on an extremely good footing.

I should like to say another word if I may about the United States because of the importance I believe all of us in Canada must attach to it. In the House of Commons recently, I made the statement, which was not challenged by anyone, that Canada-U.S. relations today are in the best state that I have observed them for many, many years. The relations are extremely close and cordial. Your President made reference to my comment about being able to phone the Secretary of State, and that is precisely the situation. There is a good, easy working relation, as there is between the Prime Minister and the President, and has been throughout the whole of the U.S. Administration. I think that has been translated into quite a few worthwhile achievements in the last year or so. Whatever various people may feel about the wisdom or otherwise of the pipeline in terms of Canadian benefit and the like (and that is still to be argued), I, as you know, am very strongly in favour of it and believe it is very much in our interests. But whatever those discussions may be, the fact is that this tremendously intricate and enormous project, the largest single project of its kind, I think, in the history of the world, was achieved over a quite remarkably short period of time and with very little by way of friction between ourselves and the United States. Similarly, this audience would have an interest in the St Lawrence Seaway. The negotiations with regard to the escalation of tolls on an orderly and reasonable basis were brought about without our having to take the formal step of abrogating the treaty and starting a whole process of either judicial, semi-judicial or quasi-judicial negotiations. Also, in terms of the law of the sea and the 200-mile limit, we have been able to work it out and are moving now towards a more permanent arrangement. Of course, there is also constant contact between us on various economic matters.

With those three targets in terms of objectives for Canada – the strengthening and the maintenance of good relations –, I think I can report to you with a good deal of conviction that, from a national-interest point of view, good relations, I believe, are "in place".

But Canada can't live in a world in which all of our time and all of our preoccupation is with just a handful of countries, as important as they may be to us. There is another side to the Canadian character that I have detected, particularly since I have been in this position. Canada and Canadians want to see a kind of moral foundation for our foreign policy. And I think there are times when they want to see the Secretary of State for External Affairs declare himself, and declare the country, on certain international issues, not because there is anything in it for Canada (indeed, there may be no guarantee that there won't be negative results for Canada), but because they believe strongly in those particular views and they want it said. They get a sense of satisfaction when something is said. They are unhappy when Canada does not, again to use the vernacular, stand up to be counted on particular issues. We have a good opportunity – probably one that is out of proportion to our size in population terms in the world community – to influence various groupings of countries around the globe who can play a significant and decisive role in enhancing and improving, for example, such things as human rights and a whole range of other, what I describe for want of a better word as, moral issues.

Canada has this unique position because we are members of the Commonwealth — and I, by the way, regard Commonwealth membership today much more positively than I did two years ago. I must confess that I was beginning to think that — let us say five or six years ago — the Commonwealth had passed its prime, lost its effectiveness and its usefulness. But I believe now that the Commonwealth in its new and altered form is an extremely useful forum that provides us with opportunities that would not exist otherwise for dialogue, for discussion between heads of government, between foreign ministers, and to encourage a consensus of views on certain matters. Our membership in the Commonwealth, a leadership role (if I may be so bold as to say so) both because of age in terms of membership and also because of our experience, has been of tremendous value. Similarly, our unique position as a bilingual country gives us a quite special role *vis-à-vis* the *francophone* countries of the world, and particularly those in the developing world. As a result, we have a particular capacity in that huge continent, Africa. Our status with the Commonwealth and with *francophone* countries gives us the opportunity to speak to both of those large constituencies, to work with them and also to call upon them for support on occasion, when there are issues on which we have a common feeling and which we wish to advance either at the United Nations or in some other international forum. Through our diplomats and through our professionals in the Department, we have to be very skilful in working through these kinds of organization and developing the kinds of consensus we have seen prove effective — for example, at the heads-of-government meeting of the Commonwealth held in connection with Her Majesty's anniversary last year in London and in a number of other places as well. I wish I could be more specific and take the time to give you definite illustrations.

There are other areas where it is very difficult to know what kind of role Canada ought to play. I am thinking, for instance, of such major trouble-spots as the Middle East. Obviously, if one is practical about it, one has to recognize that Canada is not a major player. Nor is it likely to exert the decisive influence in terms of how the conflict itself is going to be resolved in the Middle East. Obviously, as I have said on a number of occasions, the last few months have produced a situation in which nothing has changed and yet everything has changed. The whole atmosphere in which the 30-year-old discussion is taking place has changed markedly as a result of President Sadat's initiative and the events that flowed from that. But there are times when it is wiser for a country such as Canada to refrain from either commenting [on] or intervening in those kinds of situation. This is one of them, where I feel that we should allow the countries concerned to work as closely as possible together to achieve a solution and not do those things that may have a transitory applause result in terms of action but don't really contribute and may, in fact, retard the process.

I use that illustration to make another point about Canadian foreign policy. We must, as a country of our size, determine where we can be effective. We must determine a rather selective list of foreign-policy goals and objectives. In that spectrum I outlined in the beginning, it would be quite unreasonable for us, as what has been called a middle power (and I'm not quite sure what that word means), to be involved in all issues, to seek to do something in all of them, and in a real sense spread ourselves so thin that we would not be effective anywhere.

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We must select those areas where first of all it is important to us that we make our presence known and express our views, but also in those places where we have some (a phrase used in the language of diplomacy) leverage. In the case of the Middle East, that leverage comes from two sources; actually, in the last analysis, they reduce themselves to one. We are generally accepted as being balanced observers. We have not committed ourselves so strongly to one side or the other as to have lost our effectiveness in terms of talking to them as friends. That stems from the fact that we have, of course, been the Number One peacekeeping country in the world. I make reference to that because it is again a rather central point of Canada's foreign policy. On many occasions over the years the question has been asked: Is this an appropriate role for Canada? It has been re-examined on a number of occasions, and each time the conclusion has been that it is something that not only fits our capabilities as Canadians but it is something that also fits our character as Canadians. I think it is the sort of thing that gives satisfaction to the people of this country to know that we can reinforce our commitments to peace and security in the world by making our troops, our servicemen, available — not for aggressive purposes but to preserve stability in troubled regions. The "comeback" has been that we are highly respected — in the Middle East for example and in other areas where our reputation as peacekeepers is very well known. It is my view that we should continue with this emphasis.

Many have asked me in recent weeks what we would do in peacekeeping terms in Rhodesia or some of the other Southern Africa situations. My response to them would be that, as a general principle, Canada should be prepared to participate in any peacekeeping activity that may be called for. What we must also discern before committing ourselves to that kind of activity is whether it is going to be effective, so that we won't find ourselves in Rhodesia, for example, in a situation where we should be the buffer between whites and blacks. That is not a situation that I contemplate with any enthusiasm and I have made that view known to the Secretary-General of the United Nations — also to the Foreign Minister of Britain, Mr Owen, and to others who have asked me about Canada's intentions. But, if the structure of a peacekeeping organization either for Rhodesia or for Namibia is one that we believe that Canada can participate in effectively, I am prepared to say that we should certainly look at it in a reasonable light.

Having said that, I believe it is also important, harking back to my earlier comments about the UN, to have a clearer and more precise mandate for peacekeeping from the organization as a whole. As things stand at the moment, it is always difficult, and one could even say "messy", when one looks at history, to get a commitment for a force to go into a particular area, or even to get a commitment that something should be done in a particular area. We have been urging for some time not only that the United Nations look at certain ground-rules that would govern the provision of peacekeeping forces but also that we have a formula that would permit the proper assessment of all the members of the United Nations to finance peacekeeping. The fact is that we have been in Cyprus for a great many years now. The problem is that there are still countries in the United Nations — and not merely underdeveloped countries — with a very real interest in keeping peace in Cyprus that have not, in fact, contributed to the financing for support of those forces. I must, in the presentation of our attitude on peacekeeping, ensure that, to put it crudely, we don't wind up being the "patsy" in

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terms of all of these countries saying: "Good old Canada — they'll take it on and we won't even have to pay our portion of the bill".

Let me just touch on one or two other matters very, very briefly, in terms of China, from which I have just returned. A most remarkable country, one I doubt very much anyone who has not been there can comprehend. Certainly I didn't have the foggiest notion; I could not possibly have "conceptualized" the country without seeing even the small portion of it that I did. But having done that and having had discussions with the leadership in China, I believe it is going to be important over the next weeks and months for us to formulate a precise policy as to how we are going to deal with this country, with its enormous resources and its population that is fast approaching one billion people. We cannot help but recognize that it is going to be as time goes by, I suspect, a most potent player on the world scene. I should again like to spend a lot of time telling you about it but I want simply to let you know that Canada is conscious of the need for a strong approach, a well-thought-out, well-developed approach, so far as Canada-China relations are concerned.

The same is true of Southeast Asia. The ASEAN countries are just now emerging as a growing economic force in the world, with a population almost two-thirds that of the European Community. This is another area where we must look at what kind of influence Canada can have.

Finally, let me just add a word on the nuclear issue. Some of you may have perhaps been following it over these last two years — specifically, whether or not Canada would resume shipments of uranium to its traditional customers. One thing became very clear (and I think one can make this observation of almost all aspects of Canadian foreign policy) — we cannot go it alone. There are very few things we can do ourselves, whether it be sanctions against South Africa or the halting of the export of uranium. Unless there is united international action, the only result will be one of frustration for us because we shall not achieve our goals and there will be losses for us on the economic side as well. In terms of most of the issues of which I have spoken, the most important thing is that Canada act as a member of the international community or some strong element within the international community — such as NATO, such as the "economic summit" group, of which we are a member, such as the OECD. If we do not do that, then it is very likely that our efforts, as well-meaning as they may be, will not really succeed. They did succeed in the nuclear case because those elements were present plus the ingredient I mentioned a few moments ago — leverage. Here is a prime instance where Canada is a major party in terms of nuclear development and all the related subjects. We are one of the two or three main suppliers of uranium in the world, at least at the present time. Therefore we have in that area the capabilities and the power, if I may use that word, to bring about a more desirable situation. That is one that we have pushed to the limit. I think you know that we have "in place" now a regime of safeguards that is the most stringent of any country in the world. When all is said and done, I suppose there is nothing in our foreign policy that is more important than this issue. If we can as a country combine our leverage with our moral convictions against the shocking dangers of nuclear proliferation, it may very well be that, even when measured against such things as our performance in foreign aid, our co-operation with other countries and the whole range of

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activities in which we are engaged, our major role will have been our ability to move the world back from that shocking nuclear abyss. Well, I wish, I repeat, that there were time but I fear I have taken altogether too much already. I should like to have gone into many of these matters. I hope that I have given you some "overview", at least, of the kinds of thing in which we are engaged...

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