

Statement

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**NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY
THE HONOURABLE ANDRÉ OUELLET,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**OTTAWA, Ontario
March 14, 1995**



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Thank you Mr. Speaker:

I am very glad to be here among you today and to have the opportunity to speak before the members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. I still remember my last appearance before the Committee, when we were at the beginning of the process to examine Canada's foreign policy.

Since that time, the Special Joint Committee submitted its report, and the Government has responded to its recommendations and issued a Foreign Policy Statement.

If you will allow me, I would like to address five themes today which I believe have a particular interest for the Committee, namely:

- the follow-up to the process of examining Canada's foreign policy;
- the G-7 Summit in Halifax;
- the situation in the former Yugoslavia;
- the situation in Haiti;
- and finally, la Francophonie.

FOREIGN POLICY REVIEW

As part of the Government's commitment to make foreign policy subject to an ongoing review, on February 7 this year, I tabled our Foreign Policy Statement, *Canada in the World*, as well as detailed responses to the recommendations of the Special Joint Parliamentary Committee Reviewing Canada's Foreign Policy.

Canada in the World stresses the importance of Canada's privileged position globally and the opportunities it offers Canadians.

The Statement recognizes that change – economic, political and social – has accelerated since the end of the Cold War and that we must adapt to meet the new challenges posed. At the same time, it emphasizes that our actions are constrained by fiscal limits. The Statement, therefore, establishes three overriding objectives to guide the choices that must be made in this evolving context:

- the promotion of prosperity and employment;
- the protection of our security within a stable global framework; and
- the projection of Canadian values and culture.

I wish to stress that these objectives reinforce each other and are closely interrelated. By strengthening our foreign policy focus at

home, they will also help us to ensure that Canada continues to make its special contribution to global governance and prosperity.

The positive reaction we have received since tabling the Statement confirms that the Government has accurately assessed and appropriately responded to what Canadians told us during the foreign policy review. This reinforces our commitment to continue to involve Canadians broadly in the foreign policy-making process.

We have already taken steps to provide a foundation for the new directions set out in the Statement, for example:

- within the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade [DFAIT], a new Bureau for Global Issues has been set up, reporting to an assistant deputy minister who is also responsible for international cultural relations.
- DFAIT and the Canadian International Development Agency [CIDA] have established a co-ordinating committee, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, which is looking into systematic policy co-ordination between the two organizations.
- to maintain the momentum of consultation begun during the foreign policy review, DFAIT has held meetings of senior officials and leading non-governmental representatives to shape the new permanent mechanism for foreign policy consultation, research and outreach.
- DFAIT and CIDA are also preparing for the next annual forum on Canada's international relations, to be held in Toronto in May.

The Statement sets out the purpose of Canadian Official Development Assistance [ODA] and, to achieve this purpose, six program priorities. In order to operationalize them, CIDA is now preparing an implementation plan.

The reductions in CIDA's budget announced in the 1995-96 Main Estimates will not affect the ODA commitments in the Statement, which were developed taking into account fiscal constraints.

Similarly, despite DFAIT's contribution to fiscal restraint, through careful reallocation, the Department will continue to be able carry out the priorities and programs identified in the Statement.

HALIFAX SUMMIT

I know the Committee is very interested in the question of reform of international institutions. This question will also be a central focus of the G-7 Summit in Halifax. As host and chair of this year's meeting, we are in a position to shape the agenda to discuss issues of

interest to Canadians. My Deputy Minister, Gordon Smith, and Louise Fréchette of Finance have already spoken to you about the Summit. However, I would like to share some of my thoughts on the Summit with you.

We want to ensure that the international institutions can meet the challenges of the 21st century. As I noted in my speech to the United Nations last fall, we must look for ways to eliminate the overlap of responsibilities and streamline the operations of the international financial institutions and the United Nations.

Such a review of international financial institutions could assist the poorest countries, notably in Africa, by ensuring that increasingly limited aid resources are targeted effectively. Exactly how this should be done is a critical question. Your visit to Washington will be helpful in putting forward new ideas for consideration as we prepare for the Summit. I look forward to hearing the results of your visit.

I also look forward to discussions in Halifax on political issues. Some topics that may be discussed are the reform of the UN and the management of international conflicts and tensions, non-proliferation and "global issues" such as migration and refugees, and terrorism. We will also discuss issues that are current at the time of the Summit. These are difficult to predict but could include the former Yugoslavia, the Middle East, and Rwanda.

THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Allow me now, if you will, to make some comments on the latest developments in the former Yugoslavia.

Above all, the situation remains volatile.

There is a real possibility, especially in Bosnia, that fighting will resume in the spring.

As you know, the Croat government announced in January that it would not extend the mandate of UNPROFOR [United Nations Protection Force] beyond March 31 and that UN forces would have to pull out before the end of June.

Following his meeting in Copenhagen last Sunday with the U.S. Vice President, Croat President Tudjman announced that he is now prepared to reconsider a continued UN troop presence in Croatia. Canada welcomes this announcement.

Indeed, as the Prime Minister explained to a delegation of Croatian Parliamentarians last month, Canada believes that the decision to end the mandate of UNPROFOR in Croatia is a grave error that risks engendering wider conflict.

We hope that the Croatian Serbs will accept this new mandate and that the continued presence of UN troops will be able to prevent a resurgence of hostilities.

We are consulting with the UN and our allies in New York in order to ensure that the new mandate in Croatia is workable and efficient, despite a reduction in the number of troops.

Even if the conflict in Croatia is not rekindled, the conflict could easily resume in Bosnia, where the current ceasefire expires on May 1. We already have indications that all parties in Bosnia are using the ceasefire to prepare for a renewal of hostilities.

The UN, the contact group and the ICFY [International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia] are trying to prevent a renewal of hostilities and to find a comprehensive solution to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

The contact group has proposed a plan to Serbian President Milosovic, under which he would receive a reduction in sanctions on the condition that his government recognize the republics of the former Yugoslavia.

My French counterpart, Alain Juppé, has invited Presidents Izetbegovic, Tudjman and Milosovic to a summit with President Mitterrand in hopes of accelerating the peace process. Should the summit be successful, an international conference will follow to build on this development.

The draft bill presented to the American Congress on the unilateral lifting of the arms embargo against the Government of Bosnia remains a concern for this government. In fact, if Congress adopts the Bill this spring and the administration does not veto it, it would result in an escalation of the conflict, and end to the UN's humanitarian mission and the withdrawal of a great number of peacekeeping forces including those of Canada and our key allies.

The military planning for an eventual withdrawal of these peacekeepers is ongoing at the UN and NATO. It is possible that our troops will have to withdraw under difficult conditions, particularly if their departure is due to a resumption of the hostilities.

In this context, Cabinet will discuss later this month the future of Canada's contribution to peacekeeping in the former Yugoslavia. Our options will depend on the evolution of the political and military situation in the field.

Meanwhile, we will liaise closely with the UN, the contact group, our allies and major contributors of peacekeeping troops.

HAITI

When I appeared in front of the Committee last year, I emphasized my determination, as well as the Government's, to enable the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to his rightful post. Since the beginning of the crisis in Haiti, Canada has been a major player. Now that President Aristide has returned, Canada will continue to help Haiti create the necessary environment in which the rule of law can take root.

We recognize the role the military forces of the United States have played in the first phase of re-establishing constitutional order in Haiti. This phase will end on March 31 and, consistent with our commitments, Canada will participate substantially in the United Nations Mission in Haiti [UNMIH]. The civilian police force of UNMIH will be headed by a senior officer of the RCMP. An officer of the Canadian Armed Forces will be the senior staff officer for the military contingent. This is one of the most important files my Department is working on, and I am personally following it very closely.

Since the return of President Aristide, the results of the presence of foreign military and police forces have surpassed our expectations. Violence, particularly that of a political nature, has practically ceased, and in general, Haitians are no longer afraid to speak their minds or to go about their day-to-day business. However, the void left by the virtual disappearance of the Haitian military and police forces has led to a certain amount of banditry. Although we no longer fear the possibility of another coup d'état, we need to be vigilant and to continue the collection of weapons.

At the request of the then exiled Haitian Government, Canada agreed to train a hundred young Haitian expatriates to serve in a future civilian police force. These young people are now in Haiti, where they will receive training on the Haitian justice system while awaiting their assignment. Although Canada is no longer directly responsible for the project, we are following its evolution with keen interest.

I believe that this Canadian assistance is the most direct and most useful support we can offer the Haitian people in order to ensure the establishment of the rule of law in their country.

Canada has also committed itself through a bilateral agreement with the Haitian government to participate in the training of new Haitian police officers, almost the majority of whom have never served in either the army or the police force. Training offered in Regina formed the basis of the course now being given in Haiti. In principle, our commitment to supply 25 trainers will last 18 months, that is, until the end of the first phase of training for 3000 officers. France and Denmark are also involved in this project.

FRANCOPHONIE

The international Francophonie will celebrate its 25th anniversary this year, its principal institution – the Cultural and Technical Co-operation Agency [ACCT] – having been created in Niamey, Niger, in 1970.

La Francophonie, which was originally created as a cultural organization for promoting the French language, has greatly evolved over the 25 years of its existence.

It has now become, like the Commonwealth or the OAS [Organization of American States], a multilateral forum, constituting an important tool for the conduct of our foreign policy.

Beyond its traditional fields of action, la Francophonie has invested heavily, since the Chaillot Summit, in the area of democratization and the protection of human rights. I believe that la Francophonie is ready to take a new and even greater step in its evolution.

Canada now invites la Francophonie to reflect – during a seminar to be held in Canada next September – on what role it should play in collaboration with the UN and other regional organizations in the area of "preventive diplomacy," given the crises that have shaken two of its members, namely Rwanda and Haiti.

In terms of co-operation, it should be noted that of the 45 member countries and two governments participating in la Francophonie, 38 are developing countries, some among the least developed countries of the planet. La Francophonie, and Canada, are already very active in this regard. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and CIDA are presently engaged in a exercise of review aimed at better co-ordinating our bilateral and multilateral actions in francophone countries.

The next Summit of la Francophonie will be held in early December in Cotonou, Bénin. Canada is participating in the organization of this summit through a financial contribution of \$4 million. More than 75 per cent of this sum will be spent on goods and services in Canada.

I would like to thank the Committee members for their kind attention. I also wish to reiterate my willingness to co-operate fully with the Committee. As I mentioned earlier, our foreign policy review process has not come to an end with the tabling of the Special Committee's report nor the Government's response. It is a process that must continue; I cannot over-emphasize the importance this Government attaches to parliamentary participation.

There are, of course, many other issues that are just as important as those I have addressed here today. I will be glad to answer any questions you may have, or to expand on the topics I have just discussed.

Thank you.