

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JULY 30, 1981



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the Commonwealth

STATEMENT DISCOURS

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resolved.

SECRETARY
OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS.

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SECRÉTAIRE
D'ÉTAT AUX
AFFAIRES
EXTÉRIEURES.

STATEMENT BY THE
SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
DR. MARK MACGUIGAN,
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF
THE FORTHCOMING
INDEPENDENCE OF BELIZE

The Canadian Government welcomes the announcement that Belize will attain independence on September 21, 1981. Canada has long supported Belize's efforts to attain independence within its traditional and existing borders and looks forward to welcoming Belize as a full member in the Commonwealth and the United Nations.

The United Kingdom, Belize and the Republic of Guatemala have been working for the past year to achieve a formula which would allow Belize to attain independence and maintain cordial relations between Belize and Guatemala. Agreement was reached in principle last March and it was hoped that a treaty of settlement would be negotiated between the parties, by which the longstanding dispute between the United Kingdom and Guatemala would be resolved.

Although the Canadian Government is disappointed that the most recent talks, held in New York July 6 - 10, did not lead to final agreement on all outstanding issues, we are greatly encouraged by the mutual co-operation, understanding and respect displayed by the Governments of Belize and Guatemala in those talks.

In particular, we have noted with considerable satisfaction the identification of areas of co-operation in agricultural research and development, the uses of energy, and other fields and the reaffirmation by all parties of their desire to promote and preserve peace in the region. The Government of Canada remains confident that the Governments of Belize and Guatemala will succeed in reaching a comprehensive peaceful settlement on all outstanding issues in their further contacts and work closely together for the maintenance of peace and stability in the region.