



The Group of 78
Le Groupe des 78

Group of 78: Statement on Canadian Foreign Policy in the 1980s

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During the last few months, a group of Canadians with a special concern for Canada's role in the global community consulted together and arrived at certain conclusions which are detailed in the statement below. The group, consisting of 78 Canadians, are known informally as the "Group of 78" - an idea borrowed from the Group of 77 original lesser developed countries which banded together at the UN to work toward common goals. The statement of the Group of 78 - for which the prime mover has been Andrew Brewin, former NDP MP for Toronto Greenwood - follows:

The basic priorities of Canada's foreign policy should be threefold:

1. Removal of the threat of nuclear war, the greatest danger facing mankind today;
2. the strengthening of the United Nations and other global institutions designed to bring about a pacific settlement of disputes, foster international cooperation, promote the growth of world law and the protection of basic human rights;
3. the mobilization of world resources to achieve a more equitable international order and bring an end to the crushing poverty which is the common lot of the majority of the Third World

These objectives require a new emphasis in our foreign policy based on the recognition that national security depends on an international effort to maintain an equitable and stable international order.

Canada should incorporate in its foreign policy the principal objectives set forth in the Final Document of the 1978 UN Special Session on Disarmament, and take an active part in the preparation for the Second Special Session in 1982. In declaratory policy statement and in practice, Canada should demonstrate:

1. a recognition that "security cannot be built on the accumulation of weapons"; (from the Final Document)
2. a change in spending priorities so as to concentrate on helping to meet the basic needs and promote the self-reliance of 800 million "absolute poor";

3. vigorous pursuit of the "strategy of suffocation" as advocated by the Canadian Prime Minister at the UN Special Session on Disarmament so as to cut off the resources required by the nuclear arms race;
 4. declaration of Canada's intention of becoming a nuclear-weapon free zone and appropriate action to receive recognition of that status from other nations.
- Canada should make it clear that from the beginning it regarded the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as an interim security measure until such time as a general system of collective security could be established. It was never intended to be an organization to perpetuate, let alone to wage the Cold War. In association with other middle powers, Canada should make use of NATO to promote consultation among its members and should enter into negotiations with the Warsaw Pact countries to achieve a planned reduction of military power on both sides.
 - It was Canada's initiative at the United Nations in 1956 that led to the establishment of the first UN peacekeeping force that was largely instrumental in bringing an end to the Suez War and maintaining peace in the region for a decade. Since then Canada has been a loyal contributor to most UN peacekeeping forces that have been set up to contain war and bring an end to fighting. Canada should renew its efforts to place peacekeeping on a more permanent basis and establish international machinery for the pacific settlement of disputes. Canada should also support UN efforts to establish an International Satellite Monitoring Agency (ISMA). Such an agency, at present being actively studied at the United Nations, is a proposal for a peacekeeping force in space.
 - Canada should increase its support of multilateral activities carried out through the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, designed to promote full partnership in development cooperation and to strengthen the self-reliance of developing countries within a supportive world community.
 - Canada should help to revitalize the North-South Dialogue by:
 1. promoting the integration of developing countries as full partners in a more equitable world economy, through measures such as improved trade access, and the requisite adjustments in Canada to make this possible;
 2. joining with other nations in strengthening the lending power of the World Bank and the International Development Association and in increasing the voice of developed countries in its management;
 3. giving strong support to the establishment and enforcement, under the United Nations, of international codes of conduct for transnational corporations operating in developing countries;
 4. progressively untying its funds devoted to international development cooperation.

Canada should work in close collaboration with other members of the Commonwealth in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives designed to promote disarmament, strengthen international peace and security and establish a more just international economic order. It should be constantly alert to the possibilities of joining with other like-minded nations in the pursuit of these goals. Its geographical position and its historical tradition of

friendship and mutual interest have established special relationships with the United States which should be taken into account. But this relationship should not dictate Canadian policy, particularly when actions are undertaken or promoted which are seen to be contrary to Canada's considered obligations and the world's needs.

Adoption of these proposals by the Canadian people and government would, in our judgement, aid the cause of peace and Canadian security, and would make a much needed contribution to a more just and stable world.

Signed by:

Margaret Atwood, author; chairman, Writers Union of Canada

Dr. Donald Bates, chairman, Department of Humanities and Social Studies in Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, McGill University

Pierre Berton, author, broadcaster

Hon. Florence Bird, Senator; former chairman, Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada

Elizabeth Mann Borgese, professor of political science, Dalhousie University, and chairman, Planning Council, Inter-national Ocean Institute, Malta

Andrew Brewin, former Member of Parliament

Tim Brodhead, executive director, Inter-Pares, and president, Canadian Council for International Cooperation

General E.L.M. Burns, former advisor to the Canadian Government on disarmament

Rita Cadieux, deputy chief commissioner, Canadian Human Rights Commission

Hon. Thérèse Casgrain, Senator, Montreal

Maxwell Cohen, former chairman, International Joint Commission and Dean of Law, McGill University

Irwin Cotler, professor of law, McGill University

Marion Dewar, Mayor of the City of Ottawa

Hon. T.C. Douglas, former leader of the New Democratic Party and Premier of Saskatchewan

William Epstein, former director, United Nations Disarmament Division; president, Canadian Pugwash Group

Gordon Fairweather, chief commissioner, Canadian Human Rights Commission

Mrs. Geraldine Farmer, president, Business and Professional Women of Canada, Edmonton

Eugene Forsey, former Senator and research director of the Canadian Labour Congress

Ursula Franklin, scientist and advocate for Science for Peace

Northrop Frye, literary critic, chancellor, Victoria College, University of Toronto

E. Margaret Fulton, president, Mount St. Vincent University, Halifax

Sylva Gelber, former director, Women's Bureau, Department of Labour

Alfred Gleave, former president, National Farmers Union and Member of Parliament

James George, president, Threshold Foundation, London; former Canadian ambassador to Iran and the Gulf States

Paul Gérin-Lajoie, president, Prospecto International, Inc.; former president of Canadian International Development Agency and Minister of Education of Québec

Maynard Gertler, editor and publisher; former president, Canadian Section of Amnesty International

J. King Gordon, former president, United Nations Association in Canada and 1980 recipient of Pearson Peace Medal

Hon. Walter Gordon, former Minister of Finance

Father Roger Guindon, rector, Université d'Ottawa

Professor James Ham, president, University of Toronto

Richard Harmston, executive director, Canadian Council for International Cooperation

Jacques Hébert, president, Jeunesse Canada Monde

John Holmes, professor of political economy; former Canadian diplomat

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George Ignatieff, chancellor, University of Toronto; retired diplomat

Heather Johnston, president, Canadian Council of Churches

Kalmen Kaplansky, former director, Canadian Branch, International Labour Organization

Hugh Keenleyside, former under secretary general and director general of the UN Technical Assistance Administration

Dr. J. Roby Kidd, treasurer and founder, International Council for Adult Education

David Kirk, executive secretary, Canadian Federation of Agriculture

Anton Kuerti, pianist, professor of music, University of Toronto

Hon. Renaude Lapointe, Senator and former Speaker of the Senate

Margaret Laurence, author and educator

Dr. J. Francis Leddy, honorary president, World Federalists of Canada; former president, University of Windsor.

Hon. David MacDonald, executive director, Futures Secretariat; former federal cabinet minister

Dr. Donald MacDonald, general secretary, Presbyterian Church in Canada

Dr. Gregory McKinnon, president, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish

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Archbishop Alphonsus Penney, Archdiocese of St. John's, Newfoundland

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Clyde Sanger, author and journalist

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Frank Scott, poet, former professor of constitutional law, McGill University

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Prof. John Sigler, director, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University

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Bruce Thordarson, executive director, Cooperative Union of Canada

Prof. Norma Walmsley, founder and first president, MATCH International Centre

Patrick Watson, broadcaster, author

Hellie Wilson, vice-president, Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Rt. Rev. Lois Wilson, moderator, United Church of Canada

Gregory Wirick, executive director, United Nations Association in Canada

Bernard Wood, executive director, North South Institute

Diana Wright, environmentalist; former member of the Canadian Olympic Ski Team

(Editor's note, January 2000: The brief descriptions of each signatory date from 1981.)