
I INTRODUCTION

NATIONAL ATTRIBUTES

We are a young nation but an old democracy. We are vast geographically and small in population. We speak two of the world's principal languages. We have been formed, in part, by the thought and the values of our French and British forebears. Our culture has been enriched by our native peoples and by immigrants from every land. Our vision of the new world illumines our achievements and sustains our aspirations: tolerance, justice, generosity and a desire for peace.

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We are a country of distinct regions. We have created a federal system to help govern our diversity; in the conduct of our international affairs, this system has been a source of strength and, at times, a handicap.

We are at once North American and not American. We and the United States are neighbours and allies. Our relations with this most powerful country are a great asset; the asymmetry of the relationship, however, is a cause for concern. We rely on the American strategic deterrent. We trade goods, services and investment with the United States on a scale unmatched elsewhere. We share the same natural environment. Our arts proclaim our identity alongside the vast achievement and excellence of the United States. Our political system, our values, our laws and our two official languages define our distinctiveness.

We are an Atlantic nation. Our history and culture, our family ties and our economic links across the Atlantic, our attachment to democratic principles and our shared security interests explain the affinity we feel for Europe.

We are a Pacific nation as well. Our growing trade and immigration across the Pacific underline the increasing importance of our relations with countries in Asia.

We are members of the United Nations, of NATO and of two unique international families, the Commonwealth and La Francophonie, with attendant rights, responsibilities and insights.

We are a nation of the Americas, with an interest and an investment in the hemisphere's future.

Finally, we are an Arctic nation. The North holds a distinct place in our nationhood and sense of identity. We view it as special, and ourselves as special because of it.