

We are living in a period where change is a constant in world affairs, where old problems we once thought unsolvable are being solved and where new problems are emerging, re-defining our notions of security and demanding innovative and urgent courses of common action.

What are the new global threats to Canadian society, Canadian security and Canadian prosperity? The list is daunting:

- The environment, which is emerging as a threat to human existence the same way nuclear war was seen in the past;
- the drug trade, which threatens the health and well-being of a whole generation;
- the horror of terrorism, whose indiscriminate violence brings suffering and instability to so many countries in the world;
- the proliferation of regional conflicts which, although now reduced in number and intensity through super-power co-operation, afflict the globe all too frequently; and
- the crisis of international debt, whose consequences have threatened the entire international financial system.

I mention these problems to make two points. First, none of these issues will be dealt with satisfactorily without co-operation among countries. Certainly, Canada can in no way solve them on its own, although we must do our part. But secondly, these problems are in many instances the direct consequence of under-development and poverty.

Take the environment as an example. Today, most of the pollution contaminating the global ecosystem comes from the developed world. But that will change dramatically as the developing world industrializes. Those countries are sometimes faced with a terrible choice: to develop and pollute - or not to develop at all. The thought of a China or an India or a Brazil repeating the environmental mistakes we have made is a nightmare. The efforts of Canada to reduce its own pollution will be virtually meaningless if developing countries choose to embark upon a course of development without concern for the environment.

Let's look at two specific examples here - desertification and deforestation. These phenomena present the prospect of a planet deprived of oxygen. They are phenomena driven by a desperate search for fuel-wood or farmland, a search which flows from overpopulation and unsustainable agricultural practices. Those problems will not be solved by admonitions. They will only be solved by providing practical alternatives.