
cultural and human links continue to be intense and vibrant; our engagement in the international system is based on shared objectives. The constancy of our commitment is firm, as attested to by our contributions to NATO, the OSCE, and to UN peacekeeping within the European continent. The Government will pursue this relationship, including through high-level meetings with the European Union Presidency. We will, as well, continue to devote priority attention to key transatlantic bilateral relationships, as we have done with France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom over the past year.

- **NATO:** NATO remains critical to maintaining stability at a time of fundamental change in Europe. However, it will have to evolve. The threat it was built to meet has receded, while new challenges have emerged, such as those in the former Yugoslavia. To meet those challenges, Canada will press for an evolution in NATO's vocation and membership, while seeking to allay current Russian concerns over NATO expansion.
- **OSCE:** This organization deserves attention and effort from Canada, in part because it engages Europe - and particularly Russia - in security discussions with a broader focus than military cooperation alone. The OSCE still needs to prove its capacity to help provide stability in the region, and will only do so if all its members give it priority as a pan-European institution. Canada will continue to contribute to building up this organization for regional cooperation, for example, by contributing a planning unit to the proposed OSCE peacekeeping force in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- **Central and Eastern Europe:** The emergence of the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe will continue to be a focus of concern for Canadians, many of whom have links to the region. We will contribute to European security through our membership in the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and through the Program of Assistance to Central and Eastern Europe, a uniquely Canadian approach to helping build pluralism, free media, the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights and free markets and environmentally sound practices in the new and fragile democracies that rose from the ruins of the Soviet empire.
- **Asia-Pacific**
 - **Challenges and progress:** There are serious security challenges in the region including unresolved border disputes, human rights abuses, an increase in weapons acquisitions, ecological