

international development assistance respect for fundamental human rights.

The Prime Minister and I also attended the NATO Summit in Rome earlier this month, and we participated in the far-reaching decisions to reaffirm the integrity of the Alliance at a time of dramatic change in Europe. A new strategic concept will be the basis for future planning, placing greater emphasis on dialogue and co-operation and involving force structures that will be much smaller, more flexible and more mobile than those mandated by the previous strategy. NATO also agreed to institutionalize its political relations with former adversaries. On December 20 I will attend the first meeting of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council, the new forum for NATO Foreign Ministers to discuss security issues with their counterparts from the former Warsaw Pact, including the three Baltic republics. This forum will associate the new democracies more closely with NATO, as visualized in the Prime Minister's Stanford speech.

The Gulf war, the crisis in Yugoslavia and recent events in Haiti, East Timor and Zaire all point to the need for stability and security, as well as greater respect for human rights within a more democratic framework. Canada is at the cutting edge of defining new co-operative security arrangements. We are also endeavouring to promote regional discussions and regional structures in several different parts of the world, all supportive of broader, rule-based multilateral systems.

We are focusing now on a strengthened United Nations, in which the Security Council can play the rightful role envisioned in the Charter almost 50 years ago. Canada continues to contribute, through the UN, to the resolution of regional disputes, such as the Western Sahara. But the role of the UN must and will become much more demanding and complex in years ahead, as it tackles questions as seemingly intractable as environment and development, a reinvigorated disaster assistance mandate for the Secretary-General, and reinforcement of the organization's mandate in the area of human rights. Our long-standing support of the UN has given us a unique opportunity to lead in shaping the organization's mandate for the next decade.

It is a time for vision and creativity. A key challenge for Canada will be ensuring that the momentum of favourable development is encouraged through better multilateral co-operation. The multilateral agenda is active and highly charged. The efforts of the Security Council throughout the Gulf conflict have shown how the United Nations can achieve results when it is united in purpose. With respect to Iraq,