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Working for Peace, Democracy and Progress: Canada's Foreign Policy Priorities in the 1990s

The very existence of Canada — its languages, its culture, its values, its tolerant spirit, its standard of behaviour — has represented an independent voice and has constituted something different, something special, for the larger world in which we have evolved.

The Honourable Barbara McDougall,
Secretary of State for External
Affairs

Since December 11, 1931, when the Statute of Westminster formally recognized Canada's independence in international relations, Canada has sought to protect and enhance its security and prosperity through social and economic justice and the rule of law in an atmosphere of moderation and tolerance. Over the past 60 years, Canada's active commitment to peacemaking and peace-keeping, to Third World assistance and development, and to freedom and human rights has earned the country respect throughout the world.

These values have helped Canada contribute substantively to international peace and progress. This has been done through the world's leading multilateral organizations: the United Nations, the Commonwealth, La Francophonie, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Group of Seven leading industrialized countries (G-7).

Canada, in fact, is the only country to be a member of all these organizations. This membership has given Canada the opportunity not only to



pursue its own interests in the world, but also to influence the course of world events. Canada will continue to pursue its security and prosperity by focusing on these organizations, as well as on key relationships with the United States, the European Community, Japan and other important emerging players on the world stage.

A World in Transition

The world as it was known for more than 40 years no longer exists. The walls between East and West are crumbling under the pressure of profound political and economic change in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly the former U.S.S.R. New economic superpowers, such as Germany and Japan, have emerged. Communications and transportation technologies are transforming the world's financial, trade and investment communities into a worldwide market place, mak-

ing borders increasingly porous and individual countries more dependent on each other than ever before.

What is emerging is a new world, which holds the promise of peace and progress through international co-operation. At the same time, it is a world where old hatreds and ethnic hostility are on the rise, where there are new threats to security (drug trafficking, terrorism and uncontrolled mass movements of people), and where disease, illiteracy, poverty and environmental problems are still to be solved.

All the communities of the world, including Canada, are experiencing the immense pressures of rapid and often unpredictable change. Managing Canada's interests effectively in such circumstances requires vision, adaptability and leadership. Above

Barbara McDougall at the OAS in June 1991: contributing to international peace and progress.

all, it requires a definition of priorities and reliance on strong national values to guide the decisions made and the actions taken.

Canada is committed to continue to act as an agent for international peace and progress. In a recent speech, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, said that Canada will focus on the following priorities to guide its foreign policy through the turbulent waters of the 1990s: strengthening co-operative security, sustaining a high standard of living, and securing democracy and respect for human values.