

Mr. Chairman:

It is a great pleasure for me to be in this distinguished company this afternoon. As Canada's Foreign Minister I welcome your Council's timely decision to broaden the area of its concern and interest to include Canada which, after all, has been an Inter-American Relation for some hundreds of years. This welcome action on your part comes at a time when Canada too is broadening its sphere of interest and concern and coming to accept its primary position as an American nation.

Canada emerged from the Second World War with a new strength and a new sense of independence. At that time we saw ourselves very much as a North Atlantic nation, having close ties with this great country to the south of us and with Europe to the East. Changing patterns of world trade and changing world power relationships have brought about a gradual shift in our orientation to the world. This shift was given shape and recognition in the course of a fundamental review of our foreign policy that was undertaken in 1968 with the coming to power as Prime Minister of Pierre Elliot Trudeau, and completed -- in the limited sense that such a review can ever be completed -- last year.

The first effect of the review was to re-affirm our close ties, political, economic and cultural, with the United States and Europe. The second was to come to terms with the reality of our position in the world of the 1970s by accepting first that we are an American nation, with interests and aims in the whole hemisphere. These include a special responsibility for the Arctic region and its ecology and closer relations with the nations of Central and South America and the Caribbean.

A natural extension of this re-orientation of our policy was acceptance of the reality of our position as a Pacific power. In a generation Canada's understanding of its place in the world has changed profoundly. We remain the North Atlantic nation we saw ourselves to be 25 years ago, we now see ourselves equally to be an Arctic nation, a Pacific nation and above all, as I have said, an American nation.

Changes in the orientation of a country like Canada -- bilingual and multicultural -- take place imperceptibly, partly as a result of changes in the perception of national goals and interests, partly in response to changes in the international environment. The review we completed last year enabled us to take into account the changes that had occurred and to set new directions.

Acceptance of our position as a Pacific nation was one of the forces that led us to recognize the People's Republic of China and press for the seating of Peking in the