

For well over a century, Canada has regarded our relationship with Asia as tremendously important. As Asia reaches outward, we must construct both more formal Pacific multilateral institutions and less formal people-oriented linkages. Canada has been a Dialogue Partner at the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] Post-Ministerial Conference, discussing a broad range of issues, including security, with ASEAN and other Pacific countries as well as the EU [European Union]. Canada also participates in the ASEAN Regional Forum, which this summer brought together Pacific states on security matters. In two weeks, the Prime Minister will take part in the APEC Leaders Meeting in Indonesia. This state-to-state dialogue is still at an early stage, but it is building confidence, a key to continued prosperity around the Pacific.

Canada has encouraged exchanges of academics and ideas in the region. We are also working to build relationships among business people, military officers, artists and students. These people-oriented exchanges are aimed at reinforcing and broadening confidence in the region. Our development assistance in the region continues as another means to promote our co-operative approach.

For Canada and Germany, habits of economic, political and security co-operation have become deeply ingrained. Non-state-to-state relationships, including those based on economic links, family ties, and on friendship and intellectual affinity (like Atlantik-Brücke), have flourished. But the relationships among countries like ours are not static. As Minister MacLaren commented in his remarks earlier today, the European Union is in a time of profound evolution, grappling with the same sort of issues I am discussing today.

I will not repeat what Mr. MacLaren has said, but would echo his call for Canada and Europe to update and enhance our existing and extensive co-operative links.

To conclude: we have all spent a great deal of time in the 1990s discussing how things have changed since the Cold War ended. Our initial optimism understated the challenges we face today. The time has now come for us to stop looking backwards and to look to the future. The problems which are out there demand our attention, not hand wringing or nostalgia for "simpler days." Only recently it was unthinkable that the Soviet Union could collapse; surely today it is thinkable that we can work together to solve the common challenges we now face. The State is our instrument: it exists as a collective expression of the will of our peoples. Maintaining the relevance of the State in the 21st century will require that we translate the hopes and aspirations of our citizens into vision and leadership to help create a better, safer and more prosperous world.

Thank you.