

our view, communication is more of a catalyst than isolation is. And the end result is a more secure Asia, and a more secure world.

Canadian realities have also changed as a result of our engagement with Asia-Pacific. For example, Asia now provides more than 50 per cent of our immigrants. Five per cent of our population is of Asian origin. Chinese is the third most frequently spoken language of Canadians. Fifty thousand Canadian citizens live in Hong Kong.

In the Canadian Parliament, I am one of several members of Parliament born in Asia.

Despite the already existing high level of Canadian engagement in Asia-Pacific, the Defence White Paper, the Parliamentary Review of Foreign Policy and our department's response to it all pointed to the need to enhance Canadian visibility and activity in the region. You will note that this was taken very much to heart by the Navy, which will now balance its presence on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

The recent and very successful visit of two of Canada's state-of-the-art frigates to Southeast Asia and the South Pacific points to a determination to be more actively involved in co-operating with friends on both sides of the Pacific. This is a recognition that vital Canadian security interests lie in Asia-Pacific. Some of these are global concerns and others are regional.

Among these interests are such matters as nuclear non-proliferation, control of the spread of weapons of mass destruction, conventional threats to peace, environmental dangers, sudden mass movements of populations and international crime.

In closing, as a country bordering both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, Canada has the opportunity to expand in both directions. I believe the time is right for us to realize our full potential as a partner in the dynamic developments taking place in the Asia-Pacific region and, as I have just outlined, I believe we are well on our way to achieving this goal.

Thank you.