

Mr. Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and other distinguished guests,

In responding to the kind and friendly words of His Excellency, Dr. Bielka, I should like to express my gratitude for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality for which Vienna is so justly renowned, which I have received since my arrival. This is not my first visit to Vienna, but it is the first visit of a Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs to Austria. My country and yours, Sir, have much in common, more perhaps than may be readily apparent. Much of Canada's cultural and ethnic heritage finds its roots in Europe, and Austria has long been a well-spring of western civilization. Our two countries share many fundamental attitudes. Both are deeply committed to Parliamentary democracy, equality before the law, social justice and human freedom. Our constitutions are federal, reflecting the diversity which is the essence of federalism, and both of our societies comprise mosaics reflecting the breadth and variety of our ethnic backgrounds.

In foreign affairs, our policies present striking parallels, and where they differ, they tend often to be complementary rather than contradictory. I know, for example, that Austria is keenly interested in a vigorous transatlantic relationship between North America and continental Europe as a whole, which you refer to as "the Atlantic Dialogue". For our part, we attach great importance to our transatlantic ties with Europe. The Canadian government has for some time been pursuing a policy which we call "the Third Option" -- a policy of diversification of our political relations. In the context of this policy, we place a very high priority on our relations with Europe.

Like Austria, Canada does not participate directly in the economic and political integration of the European community, although we are now negotiating an agreement on economic co-operation with it. Like Austria, Canada does not see its future relations with Europe exclusively in terms of a link with the European community. Rather, it is our intention to develop and deepen our bilateral relations with the countries of Western Europe, inside and outside the community, and with Eastern as well as Western Europe -- a policy pursued with marked success by Austria.

Of course, my country is a member of NATO, while Austria is committed to permanent neutrality. But I was struck, in our discussions this afternoon, by the extent to which your active policy of neutrality is so positive and dynamic. The importance which your government attaches to the United Nations family of organizations and to multilateral diplomacy is shared by my government. An important United Nations conference on human settlements is soon to begin in Canada in Vancouver. Austria has hosted many important United Nations conferences. Canada is the host country to ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization). Austria's role, as host country to the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) and the UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) and important United Nations conferences, is symbolized by "United Nations City" on the banks of the Danube.