

It is appropriate, and symbolic, that my first official trip in my new role as Minister responsible for Canadian international relations has taken me westward across the Pacific to meet Canada's friends in Southeast Asia. It is a unique gathering bringing together as it does the Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN countries and the representatives of their "Dialogue" Partners, from the Pacific Rim and Europe. In consequence, in spite of having just stepped into this portfolio, I am with you today.

Canada very much values its "Dialogue" relationship with the Philippines and I would like to thank Foreign Minister Tolentino for his remarks. We in Canada were particularly pleased when you agreed to accept the offer by President Marcos to become Foreign Minister. Mr. Tolentino, you and I share not only a background in law and politics, but we also took up our present responsibilities on the same day, June 30th. A difference, however, is that you took on the job after elections - and I have taken it before. For both our sakes, I hope June 30th proves to be an auspicious day.

The commitment of Canadians to the Pacific dimension of our national identity has in recent years gained greatly in strength. The Canadian people recognize that their prosperity will depend increasingly on the pace of economic development achieved by the nations of the Asia-Pacific region. It is in keeping with this reality that Canada has targetted the expansion of economic ties with all member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as a key foreign policy objective. We recognize also that, to achieve this result, we must work towards a fully developed economic relationship encompassing: increased two-way trade; joint ventures and investment within both ASEAN and Canada; and a collective will to reduce impediments to trade and commercial cooperation. The expansion of economic ties was a major theme of visits to ASEAN countries by Prime Minister Trudeau and Trade Minister Regan. This theme was again endorsed within the past few months by the very successful visits of Prime Minister Mahathir and Prime Minister Prem to Canada.

The need to develop closer economic, commercial and trade relations among the countries bordering the Pacific was the focus of a positive and productive discussion during our meetings yesterday. Canada has a great interest - indeed a great self-interest - in the development of closer economic ties between our nations.

We are all free market economies with a readiness to reward enterprise and encourage investment. Consequently, while the Pacific Rim provides a framework within which we can develop our mutual economic interests - it is not now,