

Most Canadians who think about it are proud of Canada's contribution to international affairs. As a country we helped create and we continue to actively support the United Nations and the GATT and other international institutions which bring the elements of order to the world. Howard Green - along with millions of mothers in Canada and the United States - struggled to achieve a partial test ban treaty prohibiting nuclear testing in the atmosphere. Lester Pearson inspired the concept of U.N. peacekeeping forces. Paul Martin helped break the logjam which prevented the admission of new member states into the United Nations. A Canadian was the first Secretary General of the Commonwealth. Other distinguished Canadian diplomats have helped the world make progress on international questions ranging from third world development through the treatment of, and response to, refugees to the Law of the Sea and a myriad of other questions.

In the forty years since the end of the second world war, the international community has come to count on Canada as a moderating influence in a world beset by extremes. That is the Canadian tradition this government intends to build upon consistently and pragmatically. I made that point in my first speech in this office, a speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations last October.

Tonight I am honored to come to Edmonton to speak to the Annual Convention of the Alberta Mackenzie Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada to make the point that international policy is as important in the cities, towns and villages of Canada as it is in world capitals and among the traditional foreign policy community. It is important in two senses. It affects the price of beef and it is important because the tradition of Canadian citizen involvement in the world is, in its way, as impressive as the international accomplishments of our governments. I take it as part of my responsibility to connect the individual instincts with the national policy.

That is one of the major reasons why, on May 14th, I tabled in the House of Commons a discussion paper entitled, "Competitiveness and Security: Directions for Canada's International Relations" which will allow the first public parliamentary review of Canadian international policy in Canada's history.

Naturally, I think the contents of that paper are important, but so is the process important. It is designed to be both a recognition and an instrument of grass roots participation in judging and in forming Canadian international policy.