

Forum 2000, which conducted a comprehensive review of the Canada-Japan bilateral relationship and potential joint approaches to multilateral issues. The recommendations of the forum, now under active consideration by the two governments, include a call for the creation of a Joint Centre for Conflict Prevention and Resolution on Vancouver Island, which could eventually draw wider participation by other countries in Asia-Pacific and elsewhere.

Finally, we have worked hard in the United Nations, the Group of Seven leading industrialized countries (G7) and other institutions to encourage all countries in the region to adhere to their international commitments to arms control, non-proliferation measures and human rights. In the United Nations, our aim is to use the authority of the UN on global initiatives to help ensure positive and reinforcing interaction between the global and the regional levels. Our call for an international arms register is a good example of this approach.

Other governments are, by definition, our natural partners, but we realize that there are many other stakeholders with a contribution to make — and a responsibility to do so. We are firmly committed to working together with academic communities, non-governmental organizations and commercial organizations as well.

We will continue to support academic research on the topic: first, through funding for a consortium of Canadian universities dealing with Asia-Pacific security issues; and, second, by continuing to support initiatives bringing non-governmental and governmental experts into the same forum to address the key concerns of the region.

As one could expect, despite recent pro-

gress, the security agenda is long and tensions in some parts of the region are increasing. This underlines the need to move quickly from the focus on "process" to a greater concentration on "substance." We believe it will be prudent to build security forums now before the need becomes more urgent.

I believe the most important issue in the region is Russia. It must be included within the regional Asia-Pacific system. The political uncertainty graphically illustrated by this weekend's events could adversely affect the progress of President Yeltsin's cooperative foreign policy, with very significant implications for Asia-Pacific. All of us have an interest in advancing

forthcoming withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, I issued a statement urging the North Korean government in the strongest possible terms to reconsider, and to allow inspections of all facilities.

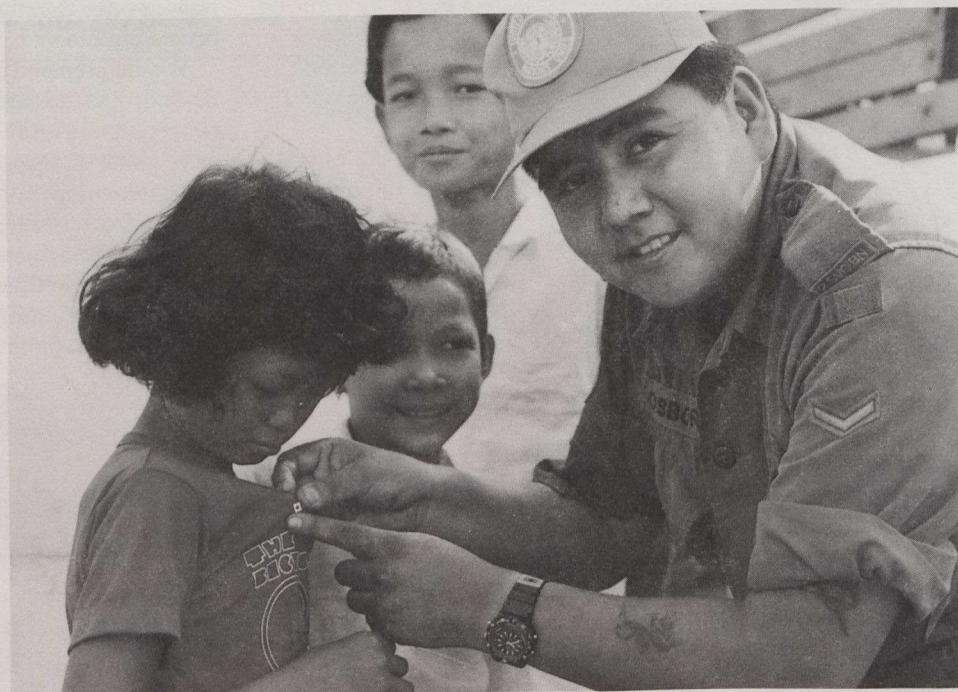
Ensuring full respect for the NPT is of paramount importance to Canada. North Korea's withdrawal is a retrograde step that poses a serious challenge that will further isolate that country from the world. Active consultations are underway bilaterally, at the International Atomic Energy Agency, and multilaterally at the United Nations.

You are, of course, aware of the self-imposed absence of the North Korean team from this particular meeting, an absence we regret. There can be no reasonable prospect of confidence and reduced tensions while the region is held hostage to the threat of a covert nuclear weapons program. We believe a more developed multilateral regional security dialogue might have offered an opportunity to avoid the current crisis.

Another difficult issue is the broad and gradual integration of China into the wider world. We have never believed that an isolated China was in anyone's best interest.

Equally, however, China must realize that Canada will be faithful to our fundamental policy of advancing the principles of human rights and democratic government, whether in Beijing, Tibet, Hong Kong or Taiwan.

We remain deeply concerned that China's military budget continues to increase at a greater rate than its rapid economic growth. The mutual confidence and respect fundamental to regional security can never be advanced while there are egregious violations of human rights, or political processes that preclude demo-



A Canadian peacekeeper with the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

Canadian Forces photo

ing the process of political and economic reform in Russia — and President Yeltsin is its only champion.

A stable Russia with confident leadership would allow serious new bilateral discussions with Japan, which is the only way that the Northern Territories issue can be settled. Its resolution would pave the way for closer economic cooperation in the North Pacific, ease residual anxieties and move the region forward.

Another current issue is North Korea, where the threat of nuclear proliferation is immediate and pressing. On March 12, when we received word of North Korea's