

To this end, we must review our priorities. In spite of our historical, cultural, political, economic and security ties with Europe, we must ask ourselves how these ties will be affected by the growing development of the European Union, which will play an increasingly important role in Europe and lead North America to reconsider its position in relation to the Old World.

North America will have to adjust its presence and influence in a Europe growing stronger and more united.

Our principal task in Europe today is building the economic and democratic structures and security of Eastern and Central Europe, including of course Russia and Ukraine.

The recent elections in Russia have confronted us with new challenges. The results of the upcoming elections in Ukraine could be critical in determining that nation's progress. We have already mentioned our interest in developing a special relationship with Ukraine and have already announced specific measures toward that goal.

There is a great deal to be done. We will continue to work closely with our traditional allies and our new friends in Europe to promote security. But the respective roles of North America and Europe will gradually change. The transition will lead to a renewed relationship as rich and harmonious as the one that saw us through the Cold War, but it will be focussed on new issues that reflect the new world environment.

Canada is by geography a nation of North America. Our relations with the United States are of paramount importance for us, and we have already established a business-like atmosphere in which to pursue our many bilateral interests. We intend to keep it that way.

The United States, too, is adapting to changed circumstances at home and abroad, and we share many of the same concerns. We believe Canadian experience, particularly our approach to multilateralism, can prove useful to the Americans as they develop new perspectives, and we look forward to working constructively on the international scene with our neighbour.

This, however, does not imply that we will jeopardize our concerns and our interest so as to avoid disagreement between our two countries at any cost. This is what I indicated to my American counterpart, Warren Christopher, during my official visit to Washington last month as I made Canada's concerns about efforts by certain groups in the United States to reduce our agricultural and other exports quite clear to him.

I also indicated to Warren Christopher that this government is determined to set its own independent course in foreign policy.