

Our Northern foreign policy will have four dominant themes:

- affirming Canadian sovereignty;
- modernizing Canada's northern defences;
- preparing for commercial use of the Northwest Passage; and
- promoting cooperation with other northern nations.

The government fully shares the Committee's conviction that Canada can and should play a significant role in multilateral institutions. We are working hard to strengthen the UN by promoting necessary reforms and providing a high level of support. We are now the fourth largest contributor to the UN System, and play an active, effective role.

Canada has an especially important role to play in the Commonwealth and La Francophonie. Next year the heads of government of both organizations will meet in Canada - La Francophonie in Quebec City in September and the Commonwealth in Vancouver in October. Part of Canada's distinctive identity is rooted in our membership in those two international families, and we intend to make the most of those advantages.

Mr. Speaker, growing interdependence, "the relentless internationalization of the national agenda", is a major theme of the Committee's report. Like the Committee, the government sees constructive internationalism as the only appropriate response to interdependence. A retreat into insularity would be a tragic mistake. No country can turn back the clock. Interdependence is challenging, yes, but it holds out great opportunities for furthering international peace and prosperity. Just as individuals can accomplish far more working together, so can nations.

At the same time we must find room for realism, perspective and humility. Canada is not a superpower and our national experience has been extraordinarily peaceful and prosperous compared to that of most of mankind. Internationalism calls for a great deal of understanding and perseverance, and a lot of plain, hard work.

Few countries are better placed than Canada to make a significant contribution to international order and development. Few other countries have such close ties to so much of the world - ties of history, family, culture, trade. We see constructive internationalism as confidently building on Canada's strengths and traditions. It is and will remain the fundamental foreign policy orientation of the government.