

At one end of the spectrum are states who are just entering the modern world; at the other end is Japan, the world's second largest free market economy. The globe's four great religions are spread across the face of the region, along with a profusion of languages, cultures and races. The distances are vast, and communication and transportation links are often as far-flung as they are expensive.

In a region that boasts over one-third of humanity, the earth's most populous nation, China, is part of the same neighbourhood as the South Pacific state of Nauru, one of the world's smallest. The contrasts seem endless: the resource rich and the resource poor; varying climates and geography; developed and developing states; new states and ancient civilizations; various political philosophies and a variety of economic systems.

In the face of this reality, is it any wonder that there can be no simple answer to what is the best role for Canada in our own interests, and the interests of others. More than any other region, the Pacific demands sophistication and flexibility in approach. The political, economic and socio-cultural forces behind events mingle closely together and are often indistinguishable one from the other. This fact, the rapid ebb and flow of developments, and the cross-currents of interests and relationships among constituent states, present formidable challenges to policy-makers both in governments and the private sector.

**Totality of
relationship**

To my mind, success depends on one fundamental rule: no single aspect of our activity in the Pacific — be it in the political, economic, security or cultural sphere — can operate in isolation from the others and still be effective. They must interrelate. They must be mutually supportive. They must be managed within the framework of a foreign policy that is contemporary and imaginative. This is true everywhere, but it has special relevance to the complex Pacific world I have described.

As an element of foreign policy, the political relationship is always difficult to define. There are few criteria and certainly no quantitative yardsticks, such as trade figures, against which progress, success or failure can be measured. In the broadest possible sense, it encompasses the totality of a relationship. In figurative terms, it is both the bedrock on which the entire relationship rests and the atmosphere which surrounds and sustains it. If the foundation is weak or the over-all atmosphere unhealthy, economic relationships — indeed, any kind of relationship — cannot hope to thrive and grow.

Let me take a few moments to mention some of the main considerations which will ensure that the political atmosphere and underpinnings of our relations in the Pacific are fully conducive to the favourable development of the economic aspects.

Perhaps the most important political consideration that we must face over the coming period in the Pacific is the need to respond with understanding and commitment to the fundamental aspirations of the countries of the region — and to be seen doing so.

This means that Canada must provide firm, substantive and public support for the integrity, stability and economic and social well-being of the region. (And may I say that we expect the same of them; we expect an equal degree of commitment to the
