

Mr. Speaker:

We believe it is high time to review our foreign policy in light of the changes occurring in the world, our national interests, our capabilities and the new constraints that we now face.

As the honourable members know, the chapter in our Red Book¹ on foreign policy outlined several initiatives a Liberal government intended to pursue. Since my appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs on November 4, 1993, I have taken steps to implement these initiatives.

For example, the Government will be ratifying the Law of the Sea Convention this year. We recognize that Canadians want a more effective international regime for managing fish stocks on the high seas. To this end, my colleague the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Brian Tobin, will be in New York this week to address a special UN [United Nations] conference on this issue.

Furthermore, I have asked my officials to produce a working paper on UN reform issues in preparation for the 50th anniversary of the UN in 1995. We have given an important financial grant to the Canadian UN Association supporting it in its efforts to raise awareness in Canada about UN reform in the context of the 50th anniversary.

Together with my colleague the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Sheila Copps, I am pursuing means to make sustainable development policies a key component of our approach to international assistance.

In our Red Book, we spoke of our desire to make Canada's foreign policy development more democratic. Mr. Speaker, our determination has not flagged. That is why I am pleased to open the debate on Canada's foreign policy review in this House today.

We also promised to develop an independent foreign policy for Canada. Mr. Speaker, it is clear the first step toward an independent foreign policy is to listen to the concerns and interests of Canadians. To make Canada's foreign policy more democratic, we must broaden the public consultation process and restore Parliament's chief role: to represent the interests and concerns of Canadians.

We promised a more important role for Parliament in developing our foreign policy. Done, Mr. Speaker. The members of this House have been able to debate our peacekeeping role in Bosnia and cruise missile testing in Canada. As I promised the members

¹ *Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada*, Liberal Party of Canada, Ottawa, 1993.