

within our government think of political pressure exerted upon governments in terms of domestic pressure, but in Washington it was obvious that the domestic pressure is also translated into a very strong, intense, and I would say irresistible international political tension. The Americans could see that, and there was some kind of an evolution during the discussions over two days, and at the end of the second day the President came back with the second speech; and contrary to what he did during the first speech, where he stressed—and I would say it is legitimate, because we need more science and more research—mainly the economic and scientific aspect of it, during the second speech he stressed the action issue and he said what I just quoted in French, that research cannot be a substitute for action as far as global changes are concerned.

So there is quite a collective international education going on in the approach that the governments must have towards environment and those global issues.

Effective international action must go hand in hand with the development of a clear domestic strategy. Over the next few months we will be sitting down with Canadians from all walks of life—industry, non-governmental organizations, government, etc.—to develop for the fall a national plan, a plan to set the course for dealing with global climate change.

We will commit ourselves to a plan of action that will contain targets and schedules. I think our country is at the core of something very important for its own international reputation. We are perceived.... I know that our friends from the other side of the House do not agree with that, but it is true, if you go to different international conventions and conferences.... I do not know what, for example, our honourable colleague Mr. MacLaren would say. He was in Washington on Sunday at the Trilateral Commission when I addressed the commission, and he must be a witness too of the fact that the general perception of Canada in environment is that we are leaders and there is a very high expectation from us.

Why? Because we have done a lot on this. We know maybe more than many countries about the way to mesh the economic and environmental considerations in the decision-making. We have been very successful in the acid rain reduction program. We have convinced the Americans to table the bill that is under study in the Congress, and we were instrumental in the Montreal Protocol in Montreal two years ago. Do not forget that it was the first international convention of this kind in environment. Never before in history had such a convention been agreed by the world. It was done in Montreal, and the fact that it was in Montreal was not a coincidence. When a convention like this is held in a city in a country, it is because this country is perceived as being a leader and has pushed and is deserving to host the conference.

We have this reputation that is nice, but at the same time I personally believe that the time is coming, and time is short, when people will ask us to translate this reputation into action, and no international action will be credible if it is not founded on a very strong and serious and significant domestic program.