

The ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] Regional Forum [ARF] is an excellent example of how Canada can work with China to advance peace and security on a regional level. The ARF represents a significant step for a region that has no tradition of multilateral dialogue on security questions. Canada and China are members as "dialogue" partner and "consultative" partner respectively. We can work in such institutions to encourage a constructive Chinese approach to such issues as the dispute over the Spratly Islands.

In this regard, Canada, in co-operation with Indonesia, is playing a major role toward achieving a negotiated settlement to this dispute.

Conclusion

Interdependence is not just a nice idea, but an absolute reality in today's global environment. Our prosperity and the prosperity of our children depend on Canada's ability to interact positively with the world around us - to gain from what the world has to offer us and to contribute our own substantial skills and resources. Nowhere is this more true than in the case of China.

Therefore, engagement is our China policy.

The foresight of Prime Minister Trudeau and Mitchell Sharp launched us on that policy.

In this world of instant communication, real understanding requires patience, persistence and a willingness to listen. Trust is based on understanding, and influence comes from trust.

Engagement to us means contact, consultation, dialogue and exchange. Only through engagement can we inform, advocate, understand, persuade and influence. These are the methods Canada chooses to employ. In the long run we believe they are the most effective in encouraging change.

Just as 25 years ago Canada chose to engage China as a means to open it to the world, so now we continue to work further with China as partners to address today's challenges of global peace and security.

Thank you.