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Canada - Europe Relations
Note from the Retreat with the Honourable Bill Graham, M.P.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs

On Thursday September 5, 2002, at the request of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development brought together a group of thinkers to examine Canada-Europe relations. The discussions were held under Chatham House rules. Participants included: Bob Keyes (Senior Vice-President, International, for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce), Jane Jenson (Director of the Institute of European Studies, Université de Montreal), Amy Verdun (Director of the European Studies Program, University of Victoria), Peter Leuprecht (Dean, Faculty of Law at McGill University), Elke Nowak (President of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries, and Professor at the Berlin Technical University), Klaus Becher (Helmut Schmidt Senior Fellow for European Security at the International Institute for Strategic Studies), Ian Angus (Department of Humanities, Simon Fraser University), and Gwynne Dyer (Columnist and Military Historian), Robert Wolfe (Professor, School of Policy Studies and Senior Fellow of the Centre for International Relations at Queen's University), and Paul Heinbecker (Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations). The Minister was accompanied by Dan Costello (Executive Assistant), Robert Fry (Senior Policy Advisor), and Pierre Guimond (Senior Departmental Assistant). In line with the Minister's wish to have this be a meeting with a small group of 'outside' thinkers, departmental participation was limited to Gaëtan Lavertu (Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs), Lorenz Friedlaender (Head of Policy Planning Secretariat), and Steve Lee (Chair) and some staff of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development.

The objective of the discussion was to stimulate the Minister's thinking, expose him to outside views, and create an opportunity for intellectual exchange. Although the Americas have dominated the foreign policy agenda recently (due in part to the Quebec Summit), relations with Europe are enormously important, and can be considered pivotal to Canada's foreign policy and to a likely foreign policy update. Also, while the scope and importance of relations with the U.S. have tended to dominate, it is worth noting that Canada is in many ways closely aligned with Europe, for example in terms of shared values and respect for multilateralism. Despite this closeness, the partnership is fading.

This discussion with experts and other similar discussions take place in the context of changes that have occurred in the domestic and international environment since the last foreign policy review, completed in 1995. While foreign policy developed through that process is still sound, a number of changes, notably the events of September 11, 2001, greater awareness of the Muslim