

In my speech to the House of Commons last week, I set out the reasons for our two-track trade policy. As you all know, we believe that with 78% of our exports going to the U.S., bilateral negotiations aimed at securing better access to the U.S. market make good sense.

This does not mean that we are in any way less committed to the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade**, on the contrary, Canada played a key role in the launching of the Uruguay round in Punta del Este.

The backdrop for Punta del Este was unpromising. Strong differences of opinion about the suitability of certain topics for negotiation existed between the developed countries and some less developed countries. The question of agriculture and, in particular, the damaging subsidy practices of states threatened to unravel the consensus text that Canada played an important role in preparing for Punta del Este.

At Sintra, Portugal, I met with Ministers De Clercq, Tamura, and Yeutter one week prior to the Uruguay meetings to discuss our positions on the GATT negotiations. The working sessions of the Quadrilateral were frank and informative. As a result, the Canadian delegation to Punta del Este was fully prepared for an intensive week of hard negotiation.

Regrettably I was not able to attend; however, Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark, and Minister of State, Finance, Tom Hockin, did an exceptional job of leading the delegation in my absence.

The result was a ministerial declaration concluded in the early hours of the final day of the Conference. It is an impressive declaration, far more ambitious and comprehensive than anyone would have expected in view of the pressures that surrounded its drafting.

The Uruguay round will be the most far-reaching set of negotiations ever held under GATT's auspices. Key matters of importance to Canada have been placed on the agenda. What did we obtain?

First, the Ministers committed their countries to a standstill and rollback of protectionist measures, and provided for much better surveillance mechanisms in the GATT.

Secondly, Agriculture was given a high priority. Here Canada's participation in the Cairns Group of Fair Agricultural Traders helped to get wide-ranging language on agricultural negotiations on the agenda.

Thirdly, Canada's need for more secure market access was highlighted. In this area, Canada formed a coalition with a number of LDC's and succeeded in getting the special problems of trade in natural resources and resource-based products on the agenda.