

Participants also benefited during the Forum's opening evening from the remarks of guest speaker, Marius Grinius, Director of the Southeast Asia Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Mr. Grinius provided personal observations of the Asia-Pacific region "from the point of view of a practitioner" that were relevant for all working group themes. In addition, in the opening plenary session, the Working Groups heard from a panel of five experts who "set the stage" for the group discussions by reflecting on the key issues and questions for Canadian foreign policy in each theme area.

The summaries of the five working group policy discussions and recommendations were reported to the closing plenary of the Forum. John English, professor of history at the University of Waterloo, and former Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, provided concluding analysis of key issues that emerged during the Forum.

Dr. English reminded participants that we are dealing in the Asia/Pacific with a region that less than three decades ago was a place of "killing fields" of extraordinary proportions. While in politics, he noted, a week may be regarded as a long time, in history a century is a short-time. Only a short time ago, the era of the Vietnam War, the region went through a series of traumas, all of which deeply involved the Western world. These events will continue to loom large in the region's place in the world and in its relations with the West.

Canadians must also repeatedly remind themselves that Canada is and will remain a peripheral player in Asia. On the other hand, Asia is anything but peripheral to Canada and to Canada's social and economic interests. While Canada is for the most part well regarded in the region, it has only very limited leverage, a central fact to be understood as we seek not only to forge strong economic links to the region but also to be an influence in support of the values that Canadians share and wish to see advanced internationally.

While the reports of the working groups identify the key issues to emerge from the day's discussion, several contextual issues, in addition to the general point about Canadian leverage, helped to frame the discussion:

- Effective foreign policy development needs to include and build on a critique of current Canadian practice and existing policies;