

importance to Canada. They broadened the concept of strategic partnership to include not only partners abroad but also those at home that can work with the Government to make Canada's international relations more effective.

1. *The United States.* Members of the Forum emphasized that Canada needs to pay particular attention to our special relationship with the United States, our most important trading partner and the world's only superpower. There was concern among some about Canada's strong and growing economic and trade dependence on the United States. Many at the Forum expect increased friction as the United States is tempted to act unilaterally to protect its interests in the international trading system where its dominance is no longer unquestioned.

2. *Strategic Partnerships.* Participants in the Forum urged greater concentration on regions of dynamic economic growth. China, other Pacific Rim countries, Europe, Mexico and future NAFTA partners in the Americas may all prove to be important and effective partners that can also balance our relationship with the United States.

3. *Multilateral Institutions.* Participants in the Forum agreed overwhelmingly that strengthening rule-based regimes and multilateral institutions are central objectives in Canadian international trade and security policy. Rule-based regimes are fundamental to advancing and serving Canadian interests, even as they promote global security. Multilateral, rule-based regimes give Canada influence and access beyond what its size and economy would suggest. A priority for Canada should be the creation or reform of multilateral institutions, particularly the World Trade Organization and the United Nations, that are most important to our interests. Forum members insisted, however, that commitment to membership in multilateral institutions is an insufficient basis for policy. In every institution, whether a trade or a security organization, Canada needs specialized policies that maximize its comparative advantage.

4. *Choices.* The private sector and non-governmental organizations are making choices about where to concentrate their efforts so that they can be most effective. Participants in the Forum urged the Government to be strategic and focussed in its participation in multilateral organizations to avoid spreading its limited resources thinner and thinner until they lose their effectiveness. Many at the Forum argued that Canada is not leveraging its memberships as effectively as it could, that its attention is not focussed on institutions that are central to its interests, and, consequently, that Canada's ability to dedicate the resources necessary to support a diffuse level of activity is impaired.

Members of the Forum urged the Government to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of multilateral institutions. They suggested that Canada commit its resources largely to those institutions that are both efficient and centrally relevant