

Security

The global political changes of recent years have forced us to reassess our traditional assumptions about security. It's a sign of ASEAN's maturity and vision that security issues have been placed squarely on this week's agenda, and that ASEAN's partners and friends in the Asia-Pacific region have been invited to join the discussions at the ministerial level.

Canada agrees that an effective approach to security dialogue should be inclusive in its membership, engaging all relevant players. It also must be comprehensive in its agenda, reflecting the diverse challenges to security -- some traditional, some not.

While we are at a critical and formative stage in this ASEAN process, it has been long in gestation. My predecessor, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, recommended such a process at a special meeting with his ASEAN counterparts in Canada in 1990. We then proposed a similar although non-governmental process for the North Pacific or Northeast Asia -- a process that has borne real fruit in better understanding and dialogue. We have also, with our dialogue partner, Indonesia, sponsored a consultative process on the thorny issue of the South China Seas -- a process that could serve as a model for broader application.

We favour identifying a common set of principles upon which to build a regional security dialogue -- building perhaps on the Bali Declaration and drawing from the broader international agenda with which we are all charged.

In this regard, I want to commend Singapore for holding the first ASEAN-PMC [Post Ministerial Conference] Senior Officials Meeting [SOM] in May. Not only will the SOM lay the groundwork for our annual discussions, but it will also feed into the growing network of complementary opportunities for dialogue on security in the region. These consultations should become a regular feature of our preparations, and we should offer a clear political endorsement of this process.

We are also very pleased that our hosts took the initiative to organize last night's informal dinner, which brought together the foreign ministers participating in both the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting [AMM] and the PMC. We hope that this dinner will be the first step toward a substantive ASEAN Regional Forum that produces greater transparency, increased understanding and a better guarantee of regional security.

Political

In our global and regional foreign policy, Canada gives high priority to human rights, democratic development and the rule of