

Ladies and Gentlemen

This has been a week of important developments in East-West relations, and especially arms control. And, in Canada-US relations, this has been a year in which history has been changed, particularly with the Free Trade Agreement, but also respecting the progress we are making together to control acid rain. More generally, the world is in the midst of an extraordinarily productive period in international affairs - in Afghanistan, in Indochina, in the Gulf, in southern Africa, in Central America, in Lebanon, there is real movement on problems that, not long ago, had seemed intractable. In Hungary, in Poland, in the Soviet Union itself, systems and assumptions are being turned on their head.

In one way or another, Canada is involved in all these issues.

Against this background, it may seem unusual that a Canadian Foreign Minister would come before the Council on Foreign Relations to talk about apartheid, a system we have all condemned for decades, in a country almost literally at the other end of the world.

We start from a premise with which few would disagree - that it is an unacceptable affront to civilized values to deny fundamental rights to large segments of a population because of their colour.

But there is an abundance of evil and injustice in the world, and the Government of Prime Minister Mulroney chose deliberately to put Canada in the front lines of the battle against apartheid.

I would like to outline today the rationale for that policy; describe what I believe is a pivotal moment in the history of the region; and offer some thoughts on how we in the West can further encourage the process of reform.

The protection and advancement of human rights around the world is a central element of Canadian foreign policy.

It has been a priority of our Prime Minister from the beginning - whether in China, the Eastern Bloc, Central America, Zimbabwe, or Korea. He secured the adoption by the 44 Members of La Francophonie of their first formal Declaration concerning human rights.

Our concern for human rights is not merely a moral judgment. It also reflects a deeply held belief that prosperity and social stability are firmly anchored only by freedom, and that tyranny is ultimately a recipe for chaos and poverty.