

- **POLITICAL:**

In political and cultural terms, the potential for Canada is equally impressive. Our membership in the OAS, combined with the relationships that are being developed at the ministerial and Prime Ministerial levels, are building a solid reservoir of good will and influence. We are not just reacting to the dramatic changes taking place, we are shaping and guiding them to reflect our interests and values. As in no other part of the world, we are full partners in the building of a new regional architecture. While there are wide discrepancies and it will take time, our hemisphere has unique potential to become closely attuned to Canadian values.

Canada has unique advantages in projecting its influence in the region. As a member of the G-7, it is already seen as a potential partner of weight. We are transforming this into reality by taking a lead role on major issues - from regional security to free trade. Our human security agenda resonates powerfully in the Americas, as witnessed by the enthusiastic support for our initiatives to ban land mines, our campaign for a Security Council seat, and the ministerial dialogue on the impact of drugs on our societies. Because Canada has never been a colonial power and has a distinguished record of multilateralism - as opposed to unilateralism - Canada is perceived as an "honest broker".

- **NATIONAL UNITY:**

There is a growing national unity dimension to our hemispheric engagement. The government has worked the "Team Canada" theme with great success, not simply for the trade benefits but also as an example of what the country can accomplish when we work together - public and private sectors, federal and provincial levels. Pursuing Canadian interests in Latin America is very amenable to this kind of cooperation - unlike the case in some of our more developed trading partners where a thriving and advanced private sector can carry most of the load.

As relations with the region mature, we are finding that it plays well in each region of Canada. The Maritimes have an historical relationship with the Caribbean and are developing new ties with Latin America. Quebec has long had an affinity for Latin America, a feeling that is reciprocated. Ontario sees a growing market for manufactured goods, while the western provinces are opening new markets for grains and oil and gas technology. British Columbia shares the Pacific dimension (and Canada's APEC membership) with Mexico, Peru and Chile, eventually to be joined by others.