

In many of these areas, particularly arms control, human rights and the environment, Canada is at the forefront of international efforts. In developing policies to respond to new imperatives, we are breaking new ground. In any new endeavour, whether it is encouraging the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to carry through on its commitment to good governance or negotiating new agreements in the environmental area, such as the acid rain accord with the United States, there will be difficulties and uncertainties.

I have no illusions that, by developing these broad directions and priorities, Canada will somehow become immune to the vagaries of an often unpredictable world. Nor do I think that the new areas now demanding policy attention will fall into place easily and quickly. I do believe, however, that Canada and Canadian foreign policy will become more focused and capable of acting more quickly in the Canadian national interest when unpredictable events occur.

The conduct of an independent Canadian foreign policy has long been a source of shared pride for all Canadians. It has, in itself, been an important integrating force in the very unity of this nation.

During the period ahead, there will be high expectations by the international community for an active Canadian presence. The world is only too aware and appreciative of the positive difference that a coherent and united Canadian foreign policy has made to international peace, prosperity and security. Individual Canadians also expect Canada to continue to play an active and independent role on the world stage.

We can meet these expectations only if we remain strong and united. And here is where the Canadian disposition toward tolerance, I believe, will emerge once again. We have overcome division before. We have found that the values and the shared interests that bind us together are far greater than those that threaten to divide us. Those principles, and the determination and the skill that we have demonstrated internationally, will surely be as successful for us at home.

Have we made a difference? Absolutely. Will we make a difference? We must.

As we move further into this country's process of constitutional renewal, it is important to remember that the successes and achievements of Canada in the wider world would not have been possible if we had not been a united country. The levels of prosperity, the degree of respect for human rights and freedoms, the diversity itself, which is so envied throughout the world, would not have been possible if we had not been a united country.

Over the next two days, you will grapple further with these questions, but I am convinced unequivocally that through our foreign policy we have made, and we can and will make, a difference to the course of human history and, just as importantly, to the individual and collective well-being of all Canadians. 962500042