

- Finally, we have worked hard in the United Nations, the Group of Seven leading industrialized countries (G-7) and other institutions, to encourage all countries in the region to adhere to their international commitments to arms control, non-proliferation measures and human rights.

In the United Nations, our aim is to use the authority of the UN on global initiatives to help ensure positive and reinforcing interaction between the global and the regional levels. Our call for an International Arms Registry is a good example of this approach.

Other governments are, by definition, our natural partners, but we realize that there are many other stakeholders with a contribution to make -- and a responsibility to do so. We are firmly committed to working together with academic communities, non-governmental organizations, and commercial organizations as well.

We will continue to support academic research on the topic: first, through funding for a consortium of Canadian universities dealing with Asia Pacific security issues; and, second, by continuing to support initiatives bringing non-governmental and governmental experts into the same forum to address the key concerns of the region.

As one could expect, despite recent progress, the security agenda is long, and tensions in some parts of the region are increasing. This underlines the need to move quickly from the focus on "process" to a greater concentration on "substance." We believe it will be prudent to build security forums now before the need becomes more urgent.

I believe the most important issue in the region is Russia. It must be included within the regional Asia Pacific system. The political uncertainty graphically illustrated by this weekend's events could adversely affect the progress of President Yeltsin's co-operative foreign policy, with very significant implications for Asia Pacific. All of us have an interest in advancing the process of political and economic reform in Russia -- and President Yeltsin is its only champion.

A stable Russia with confident leadership would allow serious new bilateral discussions with Japan, which is the only way that the Northern Territories issue can be settled. Its resolution would pave the way for closer economic co-operation in the North Pacific, ease residual anxieties and move the region forward.

Another current issue is North Korea, where the threat of nuclear proliferation is immediate and pressing. On March 12, when we received word of North Korea's forthcoming withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, I issued a statement urging the