

Europe have recently been erased. The new world order has shattered the traditional boundaries that shaped our thinking during the Cold War. Jean Monnet saw in our pioneers the spirit that was to guide him throughout his career: unity, mutual assistance and interdependence transcending all boundaries. Now, more than ever, in these days of the NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] and the Maastricht Treaty, we share the same impetus, the same pioneer spirit.

Some look at the Atlantic Ocean and see only an obstacle, a space that separates and keeps us apart. Fortunately, history offers us a totally different assessment and shows us the futility of retrenchment and isolationism. The Atlantic Ocean brought our ancestors' ships to our shores and, more recently, our troops to the defence of Europe. We share the same Atlantic rim with countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands and Portugal. You are no doubt aware of the ties that bind us with regard to fisheries. I would say that we are bound not only by economic ties, but also by moral ties, to ensure the renewal of this valuable and fragile resource.

In the course of his brilliant career, Jean Monnet had the opportunity to learn and appreciate that Canada and Europe greatly needed one another, especially during two world wars. Once again, history offers us numerous, albeit painful, examples of our mutual recognition. The names of many European cities will remain forever burned in the collective memory of my fellow Canadians, cities such as Ypres, Dieppe, Passchendaele and Vimy. Whether in the trenches of World War I or on the beaches of Normandy 50 years ago, Canada has very clearly and agonizingly demonstrated its profound attachment to Europe. The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, will witness the importance of this chapter in the history of our relations by taking part in the official ceremonies commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Allied landing in Normandy.

I do not need to remind you that Canada was born of two great European political cultures, resulting in a political system and culture that are unique in North America. For instance, Quebec has inherited a British parliamentary system and a legal system based on the Civil Code. We largely share the same cultural environment, the same humanist legacy. In many regards, we share the same approach, the same philosophy.

This, in short, is the spirit that has guided our natural process of establishing institutional and administrative ties with Europe in every area, regardless of the obstacles. After all, Europeans are among our chief allies. NATO [the North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and the CSCE [Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe] enabled us to forge solid ties to ensure peace and security in Europe during the Cold War. NAFO [the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization] has ensured sound common