

In our view, this difference is not simply a difference between regions. It is also a shortcoming. If there is one lesson which recent decades demonstrate, it is that economic prosperity cannot long endure without a structure of institutional relationships and stable security, just as security is shortlived if it is not accompanied by economic strength and social justice.

That security, that prosperity, that justice will best arise by nations regularly talking together, working together. No matter what the issue, the beginning of any process towards peace is conversation. - Conversation which does not necessarily accept that the other side is right, simply that the other side has a legitimate viewpoint. It is an acceptance of the reality that on most issues there can be only winners - or only losers.

That kind of dialogue, and the development of the practice of working together are remarkable by their absence in Asia today. Dialogue is needed between India and Pakistan. It is needed among the four Cambodian factions. It is needed between the two Koreas. It is needed between Vietnam and China. It is needed between Japan and the Soviet Union. And it is needed among all the players in the region.

The time has come to develop institutions of dialogue in the Pacific to match the maturity and prosperity of those societies and those economies. Canada believes that one place to begin is among the countries bordering the North Pacific. That would include the United States and the Soviet Union, the two Koreas, Japan, China and Canada. At the outset, such a new security dialogue need not involve fixed agendas or require that all issues be discussed. The priority should be to develop the habit of an open and free discussion. That process would identify the issues on which North Pacific nations could make progress together.

A North-Pacific security co-operation dialogue is long overdue. Security problems are a singular threat to continued economic growth. They are a chief cause of refugee movements and could easily derail democratic reforms throughout Asia. Persistent security problems perpetuate distrust, propel arms races, prompt questionable nuclear programs and involve a massive hemorrhaging of resources. The absence of structures to manage these problems is in direct contrast to the intense economic activity in the region, and a direct threat to the future of that economic activity.