

In view of this evolution, Canada is taking the necessary measures to step up its relations and increase its dialogue with the member countries of the European Community. For example, I have recently made specific proposals to my Irish counterpart, the Honourable Gerald Collins, to enrich our dialogue, particularly on the major international political issues. These proposals - which, incidentally, were well received - include:

- regular meetings between the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the European Council;
- regular in-depth discussions between the Canadian Foreign Minister and his European counterpart; and
- much closer contact between Canadian officials and experts of the European Community on issues of common concern.

These proposals will lead to an increase in the number of exchanges at various levels. Canada will thus be better able to make its voice heard and to play a useful role in finding solutions to the major international problems.

Parallel to the intensification of our relations with the political officials of the European Community, we also intend to increase our presence at the highest level of the European Commission in Brussels. The recent meeting in Ottawa of the Joint Commission of Co-operation, which I chaired with my colleague John Crosbie, demonstrated that this desire to come together is mutual. The mechanisms are now well established, and it is up to us to use them to the maximum in the active pursuit of our interests.

Security concerns have always been at the centre of our policy and commitment in Europe. Two world wars have taught us that a Europe at peace with itself is a Europe at peace with the world. The security of Canadians is closely linked to stability and security in Europe.

For more than forty years, the North Atlantic Alliance has played a major role in Europe, and Canada has reason to be proud of its participation. Throughout the years, thousands of Canadian soldiers have been stationed in Europe and each, in his or her own way, has contributed to the security of Europe and the world.

That military contribution is bound to decline. Circumstances change and we must adapt to the changes. The tensions and threats are no longer the same. We will not be sorry to see this decline, because it will be a product of the long-sought reduction in East-West tensions, which is in turn the result of the new Soviet foreign policy in Eastern Europe and the unilateral and negotiated reductions in conventional and nuclear forces.