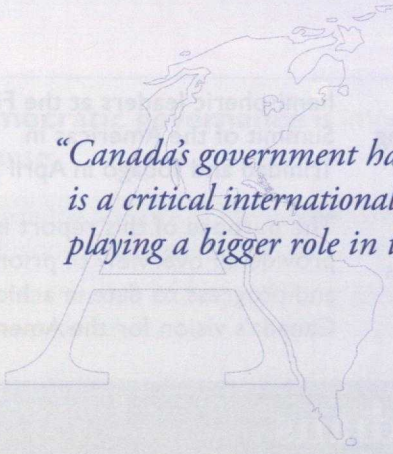


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*"Canada's government has made it clear that re-engagement in the Americas is a critical international priority for our country... Canada is committed to playing a bigger role in the Americas and to doing so for the long term."*

**Prime Minister Stephen Harper**  
July 17, 2007



© Office of the Prime Minister Photo: Jason Ransom



Prime Minister Stephen Harper at the Colombian Integral Rehabilitation Centre in Bogota, Colombia, during his visit to Latin America and the Caribbean in July 2007

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In July 2007, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's tour to South America and the Caribbean launched a new beginning for Canada's engagement in the western hemisphere. During his visit, the Prime Minister described the government's vision for Canada and the Americas:

A more democratic, prosperous, and secure region that creates stability and opportunity for its citizens.

Since then, Canada has been fully and actively engaged with a number of partners in the region to advance a wide range of common interests – from trade and investment to education, from development assistance to sharing of best practices and information on pandemics, and from policing to the monitoring of elections. In November 2008, the Prime Minister underlined Canada's continuing commitment to the Americas through the appointment of a Minister of State of Foreign Affairs with special responsibility

for the Americas. With a sustained, collaborative and consistent effort, working with partners in the hemisphere over time, Canada can contribute to ensuring that citizens in the region see improvements now and in the future.

The Americas are and will remain a foreign policy priority for Canada. Canadians have much to gain by being involved in the region, and they also have much to contribute. As the region tackles the current global economic crisis, Canada's economic leadership

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