

hand the effects of Canadian aid programs. I was deeply impressed by the commitment of Canada's efforts to date. Bangladesh is our biggest aid recipient, and despite serious, ongoing problems caused by overpopulation and environmental stress, Bangladesh has achieved important progress in a number of areas including family planning, food self-sufficiency and an economic growth rate of four percent in 1993. Bangladesh is also becoming less aid-dependent, with donors now required to fund just over 70 percent of its development budget, compared with 100 percent some years ago.

Our commitment to Cambodia is also of several years duration. We were signatories to the Paris Peace Accord of 1991, and contributed substantially to the UN Transitional Administration Committee that ushered in the new government last year. Now that Cambodia has a democratically elected government after years of war, we are assisting in such crucial areas as de-mining, technical assistance, and poverty alleviation in rural areas. It is hard to think of a more compelling environmental problem than de-mining. Canada's leading role in helping to solve this problem has been recognized by the international community. The highlight of my trip was meeting the 13 Canadians who are training Cambodian soldiers to complete this most difficult task. As Canadian Lieutenant-Colonel Focsaneanu explained to me, the Cambodian people cannot return to the fields to work the land until those fields are safe. De-mining is the most important part in helping Cambodia to develop.

Canada's political relations with the Asia-Pacific region are complex and challenging. Since the end of the Cold War, the region has evolved into an area of greater stability, productivity and justice. Nevertheless, serious causes for concern remain and other potential sources of dispute and conflict also exist. Despite outstanding overall growth, disparities continue to remain. While east and southeast Asia are outpacing the rest of the world, the majority of the world's poor are still in the Asia-Pacific region. These uncertainties present major challenges in any review of Canada's political and security relations with the region.

Perhaps the most encouraging development in recent years in the Asia-Pacific region is the growing willingness to address security issues and potential problems multilaterally, using institutions such as the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] Ministerial Consultative process, in which Canada is a "dialogue partner." But the process of multilateral consultation among regional governments is still in the early stages and much more work needs to be done before the region will develop practical mechanisms for resolving conflict and disagreement.

In the interim, informal methods of consultation have developed involving academics, businessmen, and officials acting in their