

For this reason, it was Canada who proposed that the NAFTA include an accession clause: so that other countries could join, and so that we could ultimately realize free trade among all nations of the Americas.

Co-operative Security

The desire to contribute to hemispheric peace and security was the third main reason for Canada's decision to join the OAS. Moreover, in the wake of the Cold War, these concepts are beginning to take on a new and broader significance. They are also intrinsically and increasingly linked to economic growth and development, good governance, the war against drugs, environmental protection, and small arms control, among others.

Moreover, at a time when threats from our neighbours, and even from outside the hemisphere, are almost non-existent, the role of the militaries in our countries must change. We must find ways to define their role in relation to civilian rule.

Canada is convinced that the OAS has a growing role to play in co-operative security and we are committed to working with our partners to move this agenda forward. At last year's General Assembly, a hemispheric security committee was established on the initiative of Canada and a number of other nations. In the past year, this committee has made an excellent start.

We believe the committee should now intensify its work, building on its current foundations. Among the specific areas we would like to see addressed in the coming year are confidence-building measures, mechanisms for conflict prevention and management, support for the UN Conventional Arms Register, and the strengthening of the global non-proliferation regime.

The committee must also examine the relationship between the Inter-American Defence Board and the OAS. As a body that receives approximately \$2 million each year from the OAS and yet remains largely outside the system, the board is long overdue for such a review. Canada will be guided in these discussions by the following principles: clear political and civilian control, strict guidelines for accountability, a revised and well-defined mandate flowing from this political process, and the allocation of a modest budget appropriate to these newly defined tasks. If this new role is not deemed acceptable, we would advocate that the board be abolished. The status quo is not acceptable to Canada.