

I want to talk to you today about the extraordinary Alberta advantage in trade with Asia and the Pacific.

For decades, this country - along with much of the world - has been preoccupied with Europe. That is where we expected the next war to begin; where millions of East European and Soviet citizens - often relatives of Canadians - suffered under bankrupt economies and a repressive failed ideology. And that is where the families, the cultures, the traditions of many of us come from. Now, with the Berlin Wall gone, with Germany uniting, with a massive Common Market leading to even greater European unity, we are preoccupied with building a new peace, and being part of the European prosperity. Certainly, Canada has an immense and growing stake in Europe.

But that preoccupation diverted our attention from other regions and other problems - the threat to the environment, the crises of international development and debt, the challenge of trade, the tentacles of the international drug trade, the lethal growth of terrorism, and the proliferation of regional conflicts and weapons which we now confront in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere.

It has also overshadowed developments of historic proportions in the Asia Pacific region.

While the countries of Europe and North America were building their armies and their arguments, the countries of the Pacific were creating an economic miracle which knows no equal. And now there is a powerhouse in Asia - in fact, several powerhouses - which will affect our future in Alberta more than Europe will, perhaps more than the United States. Yet despite all the evidence, we have trouble getting our minds around the idea of Asia as a determining factor in our lives. Mr. Gorbachev, in his country, talks about the danger of old thinking, the imperative of new thinking. Ironically, that advice is even more important to rich countries, who might think that we have the luxury of ignoring new realities. If we Canadians want to control our destiny, we have to be much more open to Asia, much more active in Asia.

- Since 1970, Asia's share of global output has doubled.
- Since that same year, trade within the Pacific region has grown ten-fold.
- In 1970, trade between North America and the Pacific was \$20 billion. Now it is \$340 billion. By the year 2000, it could rise to \$1 trillion.