

The voyage of the Polar Sea in the summer of 1985 dramatically underlined the deep concerns of Canadians for Arctic sovereignty. It also revealed how little we had done to prepare ourselves to exercise control of our North. A year ago, I deliberately affirmed that Canadian sovereignty extended to all the waters of the Arctic archipelago and announced regulations establishing baselines around the perimeter of the archipelago. I declared our readiness to defend our jurisdiction before the International Court. We will construct a Polar Class 8 icebreaker and take other actions to substantially increase our capacity to exercise effective control over our Northern waters.

These commitments by the government, and their implementation, will be set into a broad policy context. An overall Northern foreign policy will have four dominant themes:

- affirming Canadian sovereignty;
- modernizing Canada's northern defences;
- preparing for commercial use of the Northwest Passage; and
- promoting cooperation with other Northern nations.

The North has always been a powerful symbol of Canadian sovereignty. We have important domestic challenges to resolve in our North, particularly regarding the rights of our native people.

We have strategic objectives to secure, first through the construction of a modern North Warning System. We have the obligation to put substance into the symbol, because sovereignty must be exercised to be sustained. It is not a sufficient national policy to protest the actions of others. We must act ourselves to advance our interests and to express our nature, and it is time for Canada to do that in our North.

The other change in emphasis I want to discuss concerns the two international families to which Canada belongs - the Commonwealth and La Francophonie.

The Commonwealth had been sliding towards the margins of Canadian policy, despite our roots, despite its reach into every corner and colour of the world. We have made it a central instrument of Canadian policy again, and through the leadership of Ted Scott and other members of the Eminent Persons Group on South Africa, helped it renew its relevance in world affairs. The Prime Minister has secured the agreement that eluded former governments, and helped launch the Summit of la Francophonie, which will again enlarge Canada's trade and political opportunities.