

Canada has a long history of involvement in multilateral institutions -- witness our support of NATO and the United Nations. If, as it seems, we are moving into an era in which regional blocs such as the Community develop their positions on international issues before taking them to larger fora, then it becomes more difficult for a country like Canada to make its views felt on those issues in which we have an interest. It means, for example, that we must develop a much closer dialogue on political questions with the country holding the six-month presidency of the Community Council of Ministers. We are looking at the question of how we can achieve a meaningful dialogue with the Europeans early enough in their own deliberations. The Ten have expressed their own interest in developing such contacts with third countries. I am confident that we shall be able to advance this new form of co-operation.

If I may leave you with a final thought on the Framework Agreement, it would be that the document should be judged primarily as the articulation of a general policy approach rather than as a precise set of rules on the conduct of a relationship. The policy objective was and is to seek ways of emphasizing the positive in our relationship with the Community. We have avoided falling into the trap of condemning European integration because of the short-term dislocations it may have caused, a condemnation which in any event would have been futile. I think that we have achieved that objective. Through our regular meetings with the Community and through a number of activities which I have outlined today, we have made it quite clear to the Europeans that we see our economic and political future as involving a growing and mutually beneficial relationship.