

The great divides between East and West and between North and South are becoming increasingly indistinct. As they do, Canada's particular international role is highlighted. I would like to talk about a few of the broad thrusts of our foreign policy, which have never been more relevant than they are today.

Many Canadians are surprised to be told that Canada is a major power. Perhaps it is a natural by-product of looking too long at a world dominated by superpower issues. Perhaps it comes from living next to the United States, or from some sort of national syndrome of self-depreciation. Whatever the causes of our own tendency to underestimate Canada's relevance, it is not widely shared. Internationally, it is clear that Canada is seen as a major power.

When regional disputes break out and the world community looks for balanced outsiders to try to find the paths to peace, they look often to Canada. That has been the case in the Middle East for three decades. It was true in the nineteen years of peacekeeping in Indochina. It has been the case in Cyprus, in the Iran-Iraq war, in Namibia, in Central America. Just last month in Paris, we played a key role in a Conference seeking peace in Cambodia. The examples go on and on.

A new pragmatism has started to displace rhetoric in the efforts of the developing world to come to terms with the real causes of underdevelopment. As it does, the Non-Aligned Movement looks to Canada as a non-ideological power with whom practical partnerships are possible. That is why Canada was an official guest in Belgrade earlier this month at the Non-Aligned Summit Conference. That is why Canada's co-operation with developing countries in the Cairns Group and in the efforts to reform the United Nations system has been so successful.

It is also clear that Canadian actions on the world stage are in our own self-interest. There is nothing underhanded about this. The international credibility we enjoy is the stronger for it.

Internationally we are seen as having a legitimate interest in refugee questions because we are a major country of resettlement. Our interest in Asian/Pacific security issues is directly related to our long-term interests in Asian markets and the regional stability so essential for the long-term market growth. Canadian participation in discussions about Asia-Pacific co-operation and the emergence of new Pacific economic institutions is accepted without question. We are, after all, one of the leading trading nations of the Pacific Basin, with almost forty billion dollars in annual two-way TransPacific trade.