

As the Prime Minister said in our Red Book: "Canada has always adapted to change and overcome adversity and that will be the key to our future." We cannot dissociate change abroad from change at home. We must show determination, imagination and courage. We are confident of success in meeting the challenges of our times. However, we will need the support and confidence of all Canadians to meet these extraordinary challenges. We have shown in the past our desire to solve this country's problems in a shared, open and co-operative manner.

The foreign policy review process that I am launching today is intended to observe these same principles. But we do not seek to be iconoclasts. We do not seek to overturn all the values that have guided us in conducting our foreign policy until now. We must achieve a balance between continuity and change. Many sound elements of our foreign policy remain valuable and necessary today, objectives and characteristics that have helped to define us as an independent nation in the eyes of the international community.

I would say that the whole world expects something of us that it does not expect of others. We must keep in mind that Canada is a country which has something special that few countries in the world can pride themselves on having. We are in a sense universal. We have a universality that is unlike any other country in the world. We are Americans and because we are in America, we have forged special ties with our American and Mexican neighbours through the NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement]. But being Americans and members of the Organization of American States, we are also partners with countries in the Caribbean and Central and South America. But we are not only American; our geography also makes us an Atlantic people. Because of our past, our transatlantic past, we have forged very close ties with countries on the European continent. Within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, we have developed ties of friendship and co-operation with European nations. However, we have also looked to the Pacific. Within APEC, Canada is developing ever more important ties with Asian nations. We must not forget, however, that there are three oceans. There is also the Arctic. Given our geographic location, we must also develop relations and maintain important co-operative ties with Northern nations.

We are fortunate to benefit from both the French and English culture and language and to belong to both the Commonwealth and la Francophonie. Canada plays a major role within these organizations. We have become a major trading partner of several African and Asian countries. As a former British colony, we maintain ongoing, friendly relations with Australia and New Zealand, as well as with a number of other African and Asian countries.