

However, closer examination of that consensus revealed a most impressive fact. The strong and deeply felt support for an Asia Pacific Foundation was not based on self-interest, but was truly national in character. It has been one of those rare instances in Canadian life where I saw Canadians recognizing that there was something more at stake in these discussions than mere selfish interest. I believe there is a genuine feeling by the Eastern regions that they can best do things in Asia and the Pacific by joining with the Western regions in a co-operative partnership and vice versa. This feeling is in part based upon a very realistic assessment of the enormous cost each region or province would have in embarking upon this task alone, but there are deeper insights at work as well.

One insight is the recognition that regional and bi-cultural participation in an Asia Pacific Foundation will provide depth and added capability. Another insight is the understanding that there is an enhancement of regional interests in seeing them as part of a larger national entity – an entity that could unite Canada for larger purposes. In the words of one participant, I cannot recall ever attending meetings of the kind I had while working on this study at which leaders from the private sector, government, and the universities appeared to share as strong a common sense of purpose, and as strong a determination to do something together for the benefit of the whole country. It was a rewarding experience as a Canadian.

Like all reports, this one is incomplete. This study has only succeeded in turning over the rock under which a humming nest of interest lies. There is still a great number of interested people out there whose voices should be heard. I would have liked to see every single organization that has dealings with Asia and the Pacific, either directly or indirectly. I would have liked to visit major capitals where successful foundations are already in place such as Bonn, London, Canberra, Washington, Paris (I visited Tokyo). I would have liked to have had a private conversation with every provincial government (I have talked with six). However, neither time nor money permitted all of these activities, and since my first priority was to move quickly on this idea, it was necessary to limit my study accordingly.

Nevertheless, I strongly recommend that whoever is called upon to organize such a foundation should take up where my report has left off. They should see to it that they maintain contact with other constituents so that these voices can contribute to the strength and effectiveness of the Foundation. I further recommend that there be more in-depth studies of the activities of similar foundations on an on-going basis, with an eye to the possibility of establishing some joint activities. Important as such studies are, they are not essential for the task at hand, which is the immediate establishment of an Asia Pacific Foundation.