



**Aboriginal Policy Roundtable  
Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development**

**CANADA AND THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE:  
PUTTING PRINCIPLES INTO ACTION IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT**

**Roundtable Discussion Paper  
By Paul Chartrand**

*Without addressing the issue of poverty, there is no way we can have long-term growth because social instability will kill it.*

-- James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank.

Since the days of Prime Minister Lester Pearson's leadership at the newly-created United Nations, Canada's security and international influence have been closely linked with Canada's credibility and moral leadership. As a relatively small state, with barely one-tenth of the population or economic output of the United States, or of the European Community (EEC), Canada's emergence in the 1950s as a middle-power and honest broker arose from a widespread perception of Canadians as anti-imperialistic, genuinely democratic, and diplomatically candid. Prime Minister Trudeau expanded this foundation in the 1970s, giving Canada a crucial intermediary role in the East-West balance of power. In the 1980s, leadership in African economic recovery enhanced Canada's role as a key broker in the North-South dynamic of international politics.

More recently, Canada has turned its attention to its position in the Americas. Latin American democratization and trade liberalization have improved the potential for economic cooperation, while NAFTA has given Canada a strategic incentive to build alliances with like-minded Latin American countries to counterbalance the dominant regional power of the United States. Closer ties with Latin American countries such as Chile and Mexico will increase Canada's national interests in human rights, meaningful democracy, social stability, and economic growth in those countries. In particular, Canadians will confront the fact that the economic and political marginalization of indigenous peoples is an inescapable challenge to governments throughout the Americas, and will continue to erode the security and development of the hemisphere until justice is done.

Canada's ability to assert influence with its regional neighbours will continue to depend on Canadians' credibility. Our neighbours and trading partners will be watching how Canadian leaders behave at home, how they treat Canada's own marginalized and vulnerable people including Aboriginal peoples, and what Canada says and does about oppression and injustice abroad. Our