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On the Record

Excerpts from Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's speech to the Senate of the United Mexican States, Mexico City, Mexico, April 9, 1999

Ladies and gentlemen, the embrace of democracy and free markets is not only transforming Mexico, it is transforming the Americas. And, as these fundamental values take deeper and deeper root, from Baffin Island to Tierra del Fuego, our hemisphere is becoming not just a group of nations connected by an accident of geography. But by an active identity. With the confidence and maturity to work together toward common goals.

That is why Canada joined the OAS almost 10 years ago. That is why Canada and Mexico took the bold step of negotiating NAFTA with the United States. And that is why hemispheric leaders endorsed a comprehensive vision and plan of action for our common future at the Miami Summit of the Americas in 1994.

In Miami, and last year in Santiago, we affirmed that greater shared prosperity is a centrepiece of that vision. And we endorsed achieving a Free Trade Area of the Americas as a principal means of making that happen.

But, ladies and gentlemen, we also made it clear that economic integration alone could not yield the better quality of life we all want. There must also be an equally strong commitment to consolidate democracy, to promote human rights and to address social inequalities through promoting education and eliminating racial discrimination.

Canada looks upon additional progress in each of these areas as cornerstones on which a truly shared hemispheric prosperity can be built. We believe they go hand in hand with progress on the FTAA. With Canada in the Chair of the Trade Negotiation Committee, we have made substantial progress in the FTAA negotiations . . . I am fully confident that we will reach our goal of concluding the FTAA by 2005.

Ladies and gentlemen, in Miami I spoke of Canada and its partners in free trade as being friends, *amigos*. In Santiago, I was moved to describe the nations of the Americas as having become *una gran familia*.

As we prepare for a new millennium, the time has come to get beyond such nice words. . . . Let us, together, build on the triumphs of the 20th century that are transforming Mexico, the Americas and the world. Triumphs not of ideology or armies. But of the one force that truly drives history and progress. The triumphs of people. ●—

For a full version of the speech, visit the Prime Minister's Web site (<http://pm.gc.ca>) and click on "Publications," or contact the PMO Press Office at (613) 957-5555.

The Canada-France Partnership

The special link between Canada and France goes back to 1534, when French navigator Jacques Cartier landed in the Gaspé Peninsula and took possession of the newly discovered territory. Some 225 years later, after Nouvelle France was ceded to Britain, the link became tenuous but it was re-established informally late in the 19th century.

Full diplomatic relations came in 1928, with the opening of embassies in Paris and Ottawa. Since then, the relationship has grown into a highly complex and diversified partnership involving billions of dollars in trade and investment, scientific exchanges and political co-operation both at the bilateral and international levels, particularly through La Francophonie, the G-8 and the United Nations.

In the economic sector alone, as Ambassador Denis Bauchard noted in a speech in Montréal in June, France is Canada's seventh-largest supplier, with 1998 exports totalling some \$3.4 billion or more than double the 1993 level. Mr. Bauchard expects bilateral trade between our two countries to increase by 10 to 15 percent this year. Adding to his optimism is the fact that over the last 10 years, France was the only foreign supplier (apart from the United States) not to have suffered a loss in Canadian market share; instead its share rose slightly. Further, France is now the fifth-largest foreign investor in Canada.

This close relationship prompted Ottawa and Paris to sign the Canada-France Action Program during the official visit to Canada of French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin in December 1998. The Action Program aims to reinforce Canada-France joint undertakings bilaterally—in such areas as information technology and telecommunications, culture and scientific/technical relations—and multilaterally, in such fields as transatlantic relations and La Francophonie. The Action Program is a follow-up to the Declaration of Enhanced Partnership, signed during Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's visit to Paris in January 1997.

Canada and France have also agreed to work together to explore new approaches aimed at further promoting cultural diversity in a changing world. The two countries want to ensure that cultural goods and services are fully recognized and treated as not just any merchandise. Finally, measures have been taken to increase the exchanges and mobility of persons. In 1998, in the youth sector alone, 5000 young Canadians took part in exchange programs between our two countries.

In other words, the Canada-France partnership is healthy and strong. It is bound to continue expanding rapidly in the coming millennium, as the New and the Old World come ever closer together. ●—