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Minister announces new bilateral approach to Canada's foreign policy

Canada's continued development requires a recognition that "while interdependence among countries may be essential...the best course is to select the kinds of bilateral relationships that can prosper and endure and can serve the country's economic interests," Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan said in an address to the Empire Club of Canada in Toronto, last month. Excerpts from the minister's speech, which outline a new Canadian foreign policy of bilateralism, follow:

...Economic development in Canada is clearly a matter of priority attention for the federal government — as it is for the provincial governments. And there must be a viable consensus about what direction that development is to take, but I contend that this consensus must include our foreign relationships simply because the foreign trade and development dimension of the Canadian economy is becoming more fundamental than ever.

Important as they are, I believe we cannot continue to view this dimension solely in terms of the marketing of Canadian exports. Our economic development calculations must also take account of the various ways in which our foreign relationships can contribute to Canada's economic growth.

We have to begin thinking of foreign countries as sources of investment, skilled labour, technology, energy and strategic natural resources. Foreign countries also provide opportunities for Canadian investors and entrepreneurs, and they thus become potential partners. Our relationships with them can take the form of project development, industrial expansion, licensing arrangements, etc. All of these things in varying degrees can be key inputs into Canada's economic development....

I think an important feature of the Eighties is the growing pre-eminence of government-to-government relationships in international economic decision-making. For an increasing number of countries in the world, significant economic exchanges and co-operation are the bond for solid political relationships between the countries concerned. And the world of the Eighties will undoubtedly

see an increase in these state-to-state relationships. Canada is compelled to examine very carefully how we will respond to systematically developing the kind of political partnerships which our development requires.

All of these factors — the uncertain world of the Eighties, the nature of decision-making in economic development, tougher competition for Canada abroad, the need for viable and strong political relationships — all of these factors convince me that we must pursue more concentrated bilateralism.

Internationalist nation

Canada has probably been more noted over the years for its multilateralism than for its bilateralism. We are among the most internationalist nations in the world, and universally recognized as such. We accept the rule of law. We are founding members of the United Nations and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), of the Commonwealth and of La Francophonie, of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. We participate even now in peacekeeping operations. We help to formulate peace plans. We are leaders in development assistance and in disarmament negotiations. This is the great internationalist tradition of Louis St. Laurent, Mike Pearson, Paul Martin and, yes, Roland Michener. It is an imperishable part of our heritage, and I am confident that it will always be zealously maintained by Canadians.

At the present time the Prime Minister and I are engaged in two great initiatives in this tradition: crisis management with-

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