

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK

Interview with Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham

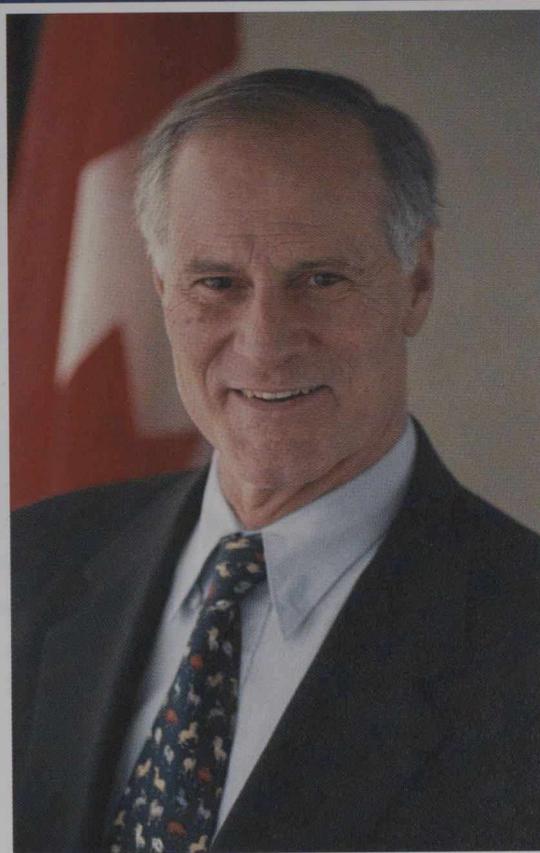
Though Mr. Graham only became Minister of Foreign Affairs on January 15, he is very familiar with Canadian foreign policy: he chaired the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade from 1995 until his present appointment. Here is a look at his approach to the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs and his view of Canada's international role.

Canada World View: Mr. Graham, how do you see yourself and your new duties?

Bill Graham: I consider myself a strong team player. Teamwork is part and parcel of foreign policy: The Prime Minister represents Canada at large-scale international gatherings such as G8 Summits and meetings of the Commonwealth, La Francophonie, the Americas and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. The Minister for International Trade promotes the interests of Canadian exporters. The Minister for International Cooperation manages Canada's development assistance program, while the secretaries of state deal with particular issues involving specific regions of the world. All these elements make up Canada's foreign policy, a policy defined by both Cabinet and the Department. Although my role is to determine the overall direction of our foreign policy and to oversee it on a daily basis, I am also one member of an impressive team charged with looking out for Canada's best interests internationally.

Canada World View: How do you see this foreign policy? What is your view of Canada's international role?

Bill Graham: Well, traditionally, two framing elements of our foreign policy have been our relations with the United States and our multilateral engagement in the world.



Foreign Affairs
Minister
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Canada's relationship with the United States is of the utmost importance—it is founded in our shared history, geography, prosperity and security. Moreover, as strong liberal democracies and diverse immigrant societies, we share many common values and extensive family ties. But we are distinct, sovereign nations with distinctive identities and very different roles in the world. And we do not always agree. Canada has always favoured a broad multilateral engagement with our many partners in various countries around the world. For instance, Canada is increasingly becoming a hemispheric nation, with closer links throughout the Americas.

I am very interested in multilateral institutions, as the solidarity created through them enables us broadly to pursue our collective betterment and to advance our common objectives. Institutions such as the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and the Organization of American States, for example, can play a very important role. Canada has been and will be a key player in these institutions, often because we can serve as an intermediary in resolving differences between peoples in different parts of the world.

I am also keenly interested in the United Nations system and the tremendous progress it has achieved over the last 57 years. Clearly, there is still much to be done to

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