

I would like to thank the Chairman for giving me this opportunity to say a few words as we open this seminar on relations with Latin America. As I see it the seminar is made up of four elements. First there is the Canadian Institute of International Affairs which has convened it and worked out the programme of study. Next there are the academics, businessmen and others from outside government service. They have been chosen by the C.I.I.A. with the advice of other organizations. The third element is made up of officers from my department who have special responsibilities for relations with Latin America or are generally concerned with our foreign policy review, including our ambassadors in Mexico and Cuba. Last, but by no means least there are representatives of other government departments and agencies having a special interest in Latin American matters. So, under the bonnet provided by the C.I.I.A. officials from a number of government departments and agencies sit down with academics and other knowledgeable citizens for what I hope will be useful discussions.

When the Government decided to undertake a fundamental review of foreign policy it did so because of the profound changes that have been taking place in Canada and in the world around us in recent years. We want to be sure that Canada's foreign policy is appropriate to the situation in which Canadians find themselves today, that our foreign policy effectively serves Canada's current interests, objectives and priorities, and enables us to make an effective contribution to world stability and prosperity. In rendering judgements on these matters we want to have the benefit of the fullest possible consultation with informed and interested persons and organizations outside government.

As you know, the foreign policy review covers a number of areas, of which Latin America is one. Early this year, speaking at a seminar on Canada's relations with Europe, I said that in the near future we hoped to convene a similar meeting to discuss Canadian relations with Latin America. Well, here we are.

Most of the officials here today are members of the task force on relations with Latin America, and most of them were members of the ministerial mission which visited nine Latin American countries around the end of last year. It was my privilege to lead that mission, and - like everyone else - I found the tour stimulating and rewarding. We demonstrated Canada's intention of drawing closer to the countries of Latin America; we had extremely valuable conversations with Latin American leaders on matters of common interest, both between ourselves and in the broader realm of international affairs generally; and we were able to explore a great many possibilities for the development of a closer tie between