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THE CANADIAN INITIATIVE FOR A NORTH PACIFIC
COOPERATIVE SECURITY DIALOGUE

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In speeches given in July of this year in Victoria (B.C.), Tokyo, and Jakarta, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, spoke of the need for improved dialogue among the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and offered suggestions as to how such a dialogue might be pursued.

The rationale for what has become known as the Canadian initiative for a North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue (NPCSD) is grounded in the concept of "cooperative security", as explained by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in his recent speech to the United Nations General Assembly, and specifically in examining whether recent improvements in East-West relations could contribute to improved relations among countries in the Asia Pacific region. Equally important is Mr. Clark's determination that, as events in the Asia Pacific region evolve, Canada contribute to the regional political process in a manner commensurate with its political and economic interests and its proven multilateral capabilities.

THE CONCEPT OF COOPERATIVE SECURITY

Mr. Clark has stated that security is more than the absence of war; it is the presence of a stable and prosperous peace. Security has ceased to be something to be achieved unilaterally or attained through military means alone and instead has become multidimensional. This is, fundamentally, the Canadian concept of cooperative security. To achieve this requires a shared sense on all sides that the survival of others is in the mutual best interest, and this in turn is dependent on building trust and confidence.

The Canadian concept of cooperative security accepts that links exist between threats; it requires dialogue and compromise, and builds on the link between stability and change.

Mr. Clark has suggested that one means of enhancing regional stability in the Asia Pacific region would be the establishment of a "system" of cooperative security which would be self-reinforcing through the fostering of habits of cooperation, negotiation, and compromise - in short, a habit of dialogue - across the broadest possible spectrum of issues.

A habit of dialogue is a process, not a forum or an event; to be effective it must be balanced and reduce animosity, must contribute to a common base of knowledge and understanding, and must strengthen confidence and build trust.

Dialogue is the foremost tool of diplomacy. It is in countries' individual and collective interest to strengthen our diplomatic resources, to replace the management of specific threats with the management of the risks to regional stability, and to replace issue control with issue resolution. Flexibility, adaptability, and realistic assessments are essential to this process.

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