

Secretary of
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CLARK SAYS MORE ASIA-PACIFIC CONSULTATION NEEDED

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today stated that political and economic security in the Asia-Pacific region and the effectiveness of the Asia-Pacific voice in the world hinge upon greater co-operation and consultation.

"Now is the time to turn to the task of giving structure and strength to a new community, a Pacific community," stated the Minister in a speech to the Victoria, B.C., Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Clark will soon begin a tour of Japan, Indonesia and Singapore.

The Minister said that no other OECD country relies more than Canada does on its economic relationship with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. He said that Canada's stake in the region goes well beyond trade and investment and into other matters such as refugees and immigration, drugs and pollution.

"The problems of the Pacific are not Pacific problems; they are Canadian. Prosperity in the Pacific is prosperity for Canada. And security in the Pacific is Canadian security," stated the Minister.

The challenge of Asia-Pacific security

Mr. Clark cited Korea, Cambodia, the Philippines, Kashmir and the border between China and Vietnam as examples of unresolved conflicts that threaten security in the region. He said that, with the exception of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), there are no regional structures to manage or resolve such problems.

"Persistent security problems perpetuate distrust, propel arms races, prompt questionable nuclear programs and involve a massive hemorrhaging of resources," stated the Minister. "The time has come to develop institutions of dialogue in the Pacific to match the maturity and prosperity of those societies and those economies."

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He proposed a new security dialogue among North Pacific countries (United States, the Soviet Union, the two Koreas, Japan, China and Canada) on regional security issues. He suggested a "Pacific adaptation" of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which could explore "confidence and security-building measures".

The challenge of Asia-Pacific trade

Mr. Clark said that greater consultation was needed on trade issues as well: the policies of some Asia-Pacific countries which take advantage of access to major markets without lowering trade barriers to their own markets; the massive trade imbalance between Japan and the United States; and the potential development of North American, European and Asia-Pacific trading blocks. Though pleased that the United States and Japan recently negotiated a trade agreement, he said that bilateral approaches can pose risks for countries not at the table.

"Their initiative should solve trade problems not transfer them, and we are confident both these nations understand our concerns," he said.

Mr. Clark said that a successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations was the key to managing international trade issues.

"The most solid basis for a lasting solution to trans-Pacific trade problems is an open, stable and free trading environment, a trading environment regulated by clear rules, fairly applied and comprehensively observed," stated the Minister.

He also proposed strengthening the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation conference (APEC) as a further means of addressing Asia-Pacific trade issues.

"It was created - and should grow - because it offers a new opportunity - which has not existed before - to manage the challenges created by the region's economic dynamism and to anticipate threats to regional prosperity before they become crises," stated Mr. Clark. "The Pacific Region needs a forum where trade and economic problems between the countries of the region and their Pacific Rim partners in North America can be addressed."

The Asia-Pacific voice in the world

The Minister said that closer co-operation was also needed so that Asia-Pacific countries could contribute their resources and talents effectively to global peace and prosperity, especially in Europe.

"European peace and prosperity will still be partial if we are not able to benefit from bringing Asia into the new Europe now being built," said Mr. Clark. "We have before us the opportunity to create not simply a new Europe, but a region of security and prosperity which circles the globe."

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