

# Statement

Secretary of  
State for  
External Affairs



# Déclaration

Secrétaire d'État  
aux Affaires  
extérieures

**93/20**

**AS DELIVERED**

**AN ADDRESS BY**  
**THE HONOURABLE BARBARA McDOUGALL,**  
**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,**  
**AT THE**  
**VANCOUVER NORTH PACIFIC CO-OPERATIVE**  
**SECURITY DIALOGUE CONFERENCE**

**VANCOUVER, B.C.**  
**March 21, 1993**

Last month I addressed the Vancouver Board of Trade and the Asia Pacific Foundation prior to my trip to Japan. I chose as my topic that day "Canada and the Pacific Century," and I emphasized the remarkable pace of economic growth in Asia Pacific and Canada's role within this dynamic region.

Today, I want to address the evolving security agenda in Asia Pacific and Canada's objectives in the region.

We are at a pivotal moment in Asia Pacific security. The past three years have seen enormous progress in a variety of forums. But where do we go from here?

It is worth taking as our starting point the stark reality that only a few years ago Asia Pacific was locked in the stalemate of the cold war. A series of initiatives by countries in the region, beginning in 1986, opened up the issues of Asia Pacific security to wider discussion.

True, many of these early proposals were steeped in the logic of cold-war thinking. Ultimately, too, most were unworkable in the absence of any regional forum to advance debate.

Canada drew two early conclusions:

- that it is almost impossible to rely on unilateral or bilateral approaches to address what were essentially multilateral questions; and
- that, though the end of the cold war removed many of the reasons for security arrangements in Asia Pacific, new worries almost certainly would emerge.

In addition, there were concerns shared by many in the region that U.S. political and military withdrawal would create a subsequent power vacuum, and that local rivalries would persist. These concerns triggered new debates about the relationship between regional and sub-regional security, and how to create stability.

Our own examination of the Asia Pacific security agenda three years ago resulted in our conclusion that a sub-regional approach to building institutions was necessary before constructing a larger regional institution.

We began by focusing on the North Pacific. We created a two-track approach, governmental and non-governmental, to encourage the broadest possible interchange of ideas.

While the focus of much of our efforts was on the North Pacific, we did not neglect the other regional security dimensions.

Some two and a half years ago, at a special Canadian-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) foreign ministers meeting in

Jasper, we suggested to ASEAN foreign ministers that they consider security issues for the agenda of the annual ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference -- the PMC. Two years ago at the 1991 ASEAN-PMC, I spoke openly about Canada's interest in discussing security issues with our partners. Many in ASEAN also sensed the sea change in international security issues and the need for new approaches.

As you know, in 1992 the ASEAN-PMC did place regional security issues on its agenda. This dialogue was expanded through the recent decision by ASEAN to host security discussions with ASEAN and Dialogue Partner senior officials outside the PMC.

Even more broadly, Canada is consolidating a consistent and balanced involvement in the region that addresses not only political and security issues, but also trade and economic questions.

In promoting dialogue, we have focused on our strengths:

- We have used our multilateral credentials to advantage, for example, through our activities in APEC to seek greater inclusiveness and institutionalization, as the process of multilateral co-operation matures.
- We have also used our official development assistance to work with others to foster dialogue on regional issues -- the Spratly Islands question has been a prominent case in point.
- We are prepared to use imagination and flexibility to defuse tensions or to advance co-operation in arms control and disarmament issues, and participation in regional policy planning discussions.

For example, Canada recently called for a moratorium on nuclear weapons testing, an issue of great concern to China's neighbours and the Asian subcontinent.

Another example is the Canada-Japan Forum 2000, which conducted a comprehensive review of the Canada-Japan bilateral relationship and potential joint approaches to multilateral issues. The recommendations of the forum, now under active consideration by the two governments, include a call for the creation of a Joint Centre for Conflict Prevention and Resolution on Vancouver Island, which could eventually draw wider participation by other countries in Asia Pacific and elsewhere.

- Finally, we have worked hard in the United Nations, the Group of Seven leading industrialized countries (G-7) and other institutions, to encourage all countries in the region to adhere to their international commitments to arms control, non-proliferation measures and human rights.

In the United Nations, our aim is to use the authority of the UN on global initiatives to help ensure positive and reinforcing interaction between the global and the regional levels. Our call for an International Arms Registry is a good example of this approach.

Other governments are, by definition, our natural partners, but we realize that there are many other stakeholders with a contribution to make -- and a responsibility to do so. We are firmly committed to working together with academic communities, non-governmental organizations, and commercial organizations as well.

We will continue to support academic research on the topic: first, through funding for a consortium of Canadian universities dealing with Asia Pacific security issues; and, second, by continuing to support initiatives bringing non-governmental and governmental experts into the same forum to address the key concerns of the region.

As one could expect, despite recent progress, the security agenda is long, and tensions in some parts of the region are increasing. This underlines the need to move quickly from the focus on "process" to a greater concentration on "substance." We believe it will be prudent to build security forums now before the need becomes more urgent.

I believe the most important issue in the region is Russia. It must be included within the regional Asia Pacific system. The political uncertainty graphically illustrated by this weekend's events could adversely affect the progress of President Yeltsin's co-operative foreign policy, with very significant implications for Asia Pacific. All of us have an interest in advancing the process of political and economic reform in Russia -- and President Yeltsin is its only champion.

A stable Russia with confident leadership would allow serious new bilateral discussions with Japan, which is the only way that the Northern Territories issue can be settled. Its resolution would pave the way for closer economic co-operation in the North Pacific, ease residual anxieties and move the region forward.

Another current issue is North Korea, where the threat of nuclear proliferation is immediate and pressing. On March 12, when we received word of North Korea's forthcoming withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, I issued a statement urging the

North Korean government in the strongest possible terms to reconsider, and to allow inspections of all facilities.

Ensuring full respect for the NPT is of paramount importance to Canada. North Korea's withdrawal is a retrograde step that poses a serious challenge that will further isolate that country from the world. Active consultations are under way bilaterally, at the International Atomic Energy Agency, and multilaterally at the United Nations.

You are, of course, aware of the self-imposed absence of the North Korean team from this particular meeting, an absence we regret.

There can be no reasonable prospect of confidence and reduced tensions while the region is held hostage to the threat of a covert nuclear weapons program. We believe a more developed multilateral regional security dialogue might have offered an opportunity to avoid the current crisis.

Another difficult issue is the broad and gradual integration of China into the wider world. We have never believed that an isolated China was in anyone's best interest. Equally, however, China must realize that Canada will be faithful to our fundamental policy of advancing the principles of human rights and democratic government, whether in Beijing, Tibet, Hong Kong or Taiwan. We remain deeply concerned that China's military budget continues to increase at a greater rate than its rapid economic growth.

The mutual confidence and respect fundamental to regional security can never be advanced while there are egregious violations of human rights, or political processes that preclude democratic participation, or blatant accumulation of arms.

We fervently believe that economic reform, political progress and enhanced security are totally integrated.

Regional security must entail building equilibrium between economic progress and political development in every aspect.

Another challenge of unprecedented proportions is Cambodia. Canada is there, on the ground, as we have been with every United Nations peacekeeping force. But the nation-building process in Cambodia -- the transition from an economic and political wasteland to a flourishing democracy -- will be long and arduous.

The key question is how we ensure that all parties in Cambodia -- especially the Khmer Rouge -- come, however reluctantly, to an appreciation of the rights of all.

South Asia, like other regions, must find ways to attack root causes of regional tensions. The nuclear weapons programs of India and Pakistan are largely a symptom of ancient distrust and rivalry. Proliferation of nuclear weapons is the most important security issue on the international agenda. We must be prepared to confront its implications in South Asia, as we are determined to do with respect to North Korea.

Until recently, there has been no intensive effort to deal with urgent security problems, and there is no regional framework. Such a framework would have to include China, Russia and the United States, and perhaps others as well.

In addition to these sub-regional problems, we must address a series of common issues affecting many countries of the region.

The proliferation of conventional arms sales, unresolved border disputes, civil and ethnic conflict, and increased military capabilities are not yet being addressed successfully, within an established framework for discussion or negotiation.

The region now consists of a number of countries with substantial economic weight -- and that number is growing every day. They must now play a political role commensurate with their new economic stature.

Only a concerted effort by the major powers -- the U.S., Japan, Russia and China -- can ensure the development of rule-based systems that will foster long-term stability in the region. But their efforts must be matched and encouraged by others.

We recognize that security structures and mechanisms are no panacea. Witness the tragedy of the former Yugoslavia continuing despite the UN, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). But co-operative dialogue can result in avenues for co-operation, the acceptance of shared obligations, and the resolution of conflict. So then, where do we go from here? How do we move forward?

Let me express my own vision.

I see an Asia Pacific in which there is a web of interdependence at different levels, motivated by a common recognition that our individual futures are linked.

It would be a region committed to habits of dialogue and co-operation. It would have a series of interlocking, mutually supportive, formal and informal mechanisms to expand dialogue as political circumstances required:

- a truly engaged ASEAN-PMC;
- a form of Five Power Dialogue in South Asia; and
- a formal mechanism in Northeast Asia dealing with the Korean Peninsula, and providing the framework for a Russian-Pacific partnership.

While we see an opportunity now to extend intergovernmental dialogue, there is clearly a role for major contributions from outside government. Some have proposed a broader "track two" agenda embracing all of the region. This would be an enormous practical and intellectual contribution, which Canada would support, either focused on Northeast Asia or more broadly.

Governments now come together at the ministerial level in the ASEAN-PMC. There is a need for a more substantive agenda for these discussions. The proposals made by Australia at the last PMC offer an opportunity to build a consensus approach to regional confidence and security-building mechanisms. I emphasize that these approaches are useful also for the region as a whole, and for their extension beyond Southeast Asia.

Canada has no strict preconditions about the next steps. But four main principles are relevant for the immediate future:

- First, inclusiveness. There can be no hidden agenda. All key stakeholders must be involved, as well as those with significant economic stakes in the broader community.
- Second, any new regional framework must allow for differentiation in sub-regions, recognizing distinct security approaches.
- Third, a broad multilateral framework in the ASEAN-PMC, and possibly in Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC), must build on -- not replace -- those bilateral relationships that are indispensable to establishing a sense of confidence in the region.
- And fourth, as the building of appropriate institutions proceeds at the government level, a stronger pattern of co-operation among other communities -- notably academic -- must develop, since many of you have been at the cutting edge of the Asia Pacific security dialogue. You must continue to press governments on hard regional issues. We need you to bring your ideas to bear on wider issues of global stability, and on how the region can make a real contribution to world peace.

Over time, we expect Asia Pacific will acquire the stability and sense of self-confidence that would permit it to play a more

active and more effective role in global affairs, equal to its economic strength.

Today, Asia Pacific is the most dynamic area of the world. It has become a model to others in the economic field. But its potential for security co-operation has yet to be achieved. An outward-looking, confident Asia Pacific has much to offer others in helping to manage global affairs.

Canada's commitment to Asia Pacific is strong. For many years now, our trade across the Pacific has surpassed our trade with Europe. Fifty per cent of new Canadians are from Asia, and Chinese is now the third most widely spoken language in Canada.

We take our responsibilities as a regional partner seriously, and we are prepared to bring our skills and expertise to the table. We will continue to support initiatives that ensure that Canada and Canadians are closely involved with others in developing new frameworks for Asia Pacific co-operation.

When I spoke a few weeks ago about "the Pacific Century," I emphasized Canada's belief in multilateral approaches to peace and security and our willingness to back up these beliefs with substantial commitments of human and financial resources. Let me reinforce that pledge today.

As a Pacific country, Canada will be part of the Pacific century.