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**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:
CANADA'S ROLE**

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It's wonderful to be speaking here in Calgary. I'm not only a Western Canadian, I'm actually an Albertan, my parents live in Lethbridge and I'm a proud graduate of the Lethbridge Collegiate Institute. But I've been away from Alberta for twenty years, although I've come back for occasional visits. It seems like home but seen through a cloudy glass and it's nice to be back in this intellectually clear atmosphere. I missed yesterday's proceedings because I was speaking at the annual conference of the Organization for the History of Canada. What relevance does history have for public policy and the politics of international law? Of course it has enormous relevance. Doing public policy without an awareness of historical context is like planting cut flowers – it doesn't take you very far. And I'm delighted to be speaking today at a conference on ethics and leadership because the argument I want to put to you in the next fifteen minutes is that here in Canada we're going in entirely the wrong direction in a time of massive, dramatic, cataclysmic international change, and thus abdicating our ethical and leadership responsibilities.

But I want to begin by dealing with the issue or the definition of international institutions, because this panel is entitled "International Institutions: Canada's Role." I'm sure that many of you, when you first think international institutions, think the United Nations, NATO, the WTO, formal bureaucratized institutions that sit in buildings, have secretary generals, and hold meetings. Those are international institutions. But of course international institutions go beyond that. The Land Mines Convention is an international institution – it doesn't have a

building, it has a treaty. The Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and the Third Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War are international institutions. So indeed is NAFTA which doesn't actually have a bureaucracy, but has a profound impact on this country and indeed on the world. And there are informal institutions as well. Diplomacy is an international institution, diplomats operate in institutionalized, traditionalized ways and form institutional units and fulfill institutionalized functions. So too is something called customary international law, the unwritten but extremely influential body of norms that govern state behaviour outside of the framework, or in parallel to the framework, of treaties. International institutions are *everywhere*. They are multilateral, they are bilateral, they are visible, they are invisible and they interconnect and define our world. It's a pretty complex world. Instead of "International Institutions: Canada's Role," the title of this panel could be "International Relations – Canada's Role." And yet in this country we sometimes tend to miss the complexity, the fact that there is such an inter-related, complex, multilateral web of relationships, of institutions, of norms, of risks, of opportunities, because we obsess constantly, excessively, repeatedly about the United States. It's pretty easy to obsess about the United States. It's very close, it's very big, and economically it means almost everything to us. It's also growing more important every day. When I left Lethbridge twenty years ago the train tracks that run past my parents' house on the way to Coutts and the U.S. border carried two trains a day; now they carry a train every few hours. We have become ever more closely related to the United States. But, as I have said, obsession tends to distract our attention from other things, particularly at a time when the leadership in our powerful neighbour is missing the boat in terms of the real challenges of this world.

President George W. Bush and his advisors repeatedly assert that the defining all-important challenge in our world is international terrorism. Since 9/11, international terrorism has

been the framework of analysis and policy-making. And I want to suggest that on an objective, non-obsessive view of international risks – international terrorism – is actually a long ways down the list. I hate to say this – but I will say this – in Calgary, the oil capital of Canada: the number one risk to the human species is climate change – unquestionably climate change. The survival of our species is at risk through climate change. Environment Canada is predicting a five degree Celsius average increase in temperature in the western Arctic within the next hundred years. *Five degrees* – that is, potentially, an extinction level of change. Good-bye polar bears, good-bye beluga whales, good-bye fish, good-bye trees, good-bye forestry, good-bye fisheries. It's enormous beyond belief. And yet our leaders, our *ethical* leaders refuse to make this the number one issue. Because the most powerful country in the world pretends it's not a problem. There's an abdication of leadership on the part of our leaders to grapple with this change – and it's not just Kyoto that's necessary. I bought a Toyota Prius last month – a hybrid car that gets over forty miles to the gallon. Why? Because if we don't start changing our cars, if I don't start changing my car, if you don't start changing your car, hybrid forms of transportation will not become economically viable. And yet I pay more for my Toyota Prius than I would pay for an SUV because the tax incentives are skewed in favour of SUV's and not hybrid cars. That's a failure of leadership on the part of those who devise our tax structures and those who lead our country and provinces. And the lack of leadership by Washington is a weak excuse. Why, when we have something facing us of the magnitude of climate change, couldn't countries like Canada, Germany, France, Japan and South Korea and others around the world say: "We're going to deal with this problem on our own now, as much as we can, and maybe one day when the United States, China and Russia are ready to catch up, well, we'll have led the way, we'll have made that happen".

Other huge problems that we're ignoring, that we've been distracted from because of our obsession with the United States, include international epidemics – SARS was a warning; the next mutation could be a thousand times worse. What are we doing about it? Almost nothing. And yet if we're unlucky and at some point in the next decade a hundred million or a billion people are wiped out by some new strain of influenza, that will eclipse international terrorism as a threat to humankind. Almost nothing. We haven't eradicated polio yet. Antibiotic resistant tuberculosis is making significant inroads. My father had West Nile virus last summer. What are we doing about it? Almost nothing.

We obsess about the responsibility to protect and the need to come up with new conceptions of state sovereignty and humanitarian action. Genocide is occurring *right now*, today, in Darfur in Western Sudan. Is anyone going there? No, because the United States doesn't want to be involved. *That's* a failure of leadership, not only on the part of George W. Bush but on the part of Jacques Chirac, Tony Blair, and Paul Martin.

Other problems include the trade in small arms. Most of the people who die from violence in today's world don't die from tanks, or missiles, or precision-guided bombs, they die from AK-47's and other small arms. Yet we still don't have an effective treaty limiting the transfer and trade of small arms between countries. We *still* don't have a treaty on that. Instead we see an increased arms trade, increased sales of small weapons to the developing world and a proliferation of technology; the development by the United States of a new generation of land mines and a new generation of small bunker busting nuclear weapons. And the response of the Canadian government to the challenge of disarmament is to indicate a desire to sign up to ballistic missile defence. It's the antithesis of disarmament. It's armament, the development of new technologies. It's bizarre; it's the failure of leadership.

And then, finally, let's talk about international development. I know that the gentleman in whose honour this conference is

held travelled frequently to the developing world, and that's something that I hope that you've all done. The inequalities in this world are increasing rather than decreasing. The anger and the resentment increases as well; particularly as poor people become more aware, in our interconnected world, of the opportunities that are not available to them. The resentment is a contributing factor towards international terrorism and ethnic strife. But it's also more than that, it's not just an interest, it's an obligation for all of us. And yet, Canada's foreign aid budget is less than half of what it was in 1984 as a percentage of GDP. We're spending less, not more. We hear fine words in terms of NEPAD and the new initiative on AIDS/HIV, but if you actually look at the numbers we're going down rather than up. These are the real challenges. Yes, international terrorism is a challenge, but we can deal with it. Indeed, with cooperation, we can deal with all of these challenges. The problem, though, is twofold. First, these are collective action problems and it's very easy for countries to say: "Well, we can't do anything because others will free ride." Second, there are issues that require leadership and when there is one country that is so dominantly powerful and about whom we all obsess, when it chooses not to lead, it's very easy to follow that lack of leadership.

And so my suggestion today in terms of Canada and international institutions is very simple: it's time for us to lead and not to look to Washington. And it's time for us to put our money where our mouth is and stand up as an independent country that is a friend and ally of the United States but also a friend and ally of people everywhere. And to move forward in ways that are unexpected and yet necessary. To perhaps put a goal forward, a firm goal forward, to reduce CO2 emissions in Canada not to 1990 levels but to sixty percent below 1990 levels, and thus become the global leader in the reduction of CO2 emissions. To indicate that Canada is going to be serious about international development and return our spending to 1984 levels, and then go beyond that because it's still a small amount of money, and thus show the world that we can be a leader there too.

And perhaps to do something really bold with regard to the issue of Iraq. Let's create a force of five or ten thousand Canadian soldiers who are designated as international peacekeepers with heavy lift aircraft to get them where they need to go and then offer them to the United Nations Secretary General on a standing basis for deployment at his discretion. To fulfill the vision that the representatives in San Francisco in 1945 had of a standing U.N. force and to do it, not because we've managed to get agreement with other countries, but just because it's the right thing to do. It's a lot cheaper than buying into missile defence. Missile defence is going to cost upwards of half a trillion dollars. If Canada is required to pay for even five percent of that, that cost would massively exceed the cost of five thousand or ten thousand blue berets. Will the United States be unhappy if we do this sort of thing? Of course, since those who abdicate leadership hate to see others fulfilling a leadership role. But that's okay, we've stood up to them before and proven we can be their best friend and ally and be an independent country at the same time. That's been very well documented, not just in the Vietnam War but also with respect to Iraq. So I urge all of you, especially the young people in the room, when you think about international institutions and Canada's role, stop thinking about the United States and start thinking about Canada. There's a great opportunity here, not just a great challenge, and in my view that makes it all worthwhile. This is why I'm coming back to Canada, because I've grown tired of the lack of leadership in the United States, while here I feel a sense of opportunity and restrained hope that is ready to burst forward again much as it did in the 1950's and 1960's. And so I hope that you'll work with me – as together we try to make something happen here that isn't happening elsewhere, that is, to exercise ethical leadership in our world. Thank you.