

bilateral institution. "The assumption was not questioned," said John Holmes, "that joint mechanisms tend toward integration."

I was no exception.

In the first speech I made in the U.S. in my capacity as Ambassador – it was in Lansing, Michigan, in 1981 – I chose as a theme the reluctance of our two countries to resort to binational institutions or third-party techniques in the management of our affairs. Although there were signs of a change of attitude in the air, I thought I was expressing eternal verities.

To sum up, Canada's foreign policy, for a period of half a century, was characterized by two dominant strategies, both arising from our concerns about U.S. power and influence over our national destiny. Multilateralism and distrust of bilateral institutions endured through the decades and through changes in governments as the twin hallmarks of our foreign policy.

These strategies are now challenged by events entirely beyond the control of Canada. Not only are they challenged; they are being undermined by the deep and enduring trend of events in both the United States and Europe.

We are at one of the great disjunctions in the history of our foreign policy. We are now in an era of discontinuity.

To understand why, it is necessary first to look at the course of domestic change in the U.S. The idea of centralized diplomatic management of our relations with the U.S. and of avoiding mechanisms that could constrain our sovereignty evolved in the era of the imperial presidency. The Great Depression, the Second World War and then the Cold War all contributed mightily to the growth of power in the White House. It was feasible, therefore, and even logical to concentrate power in the foreign affairs bureaucracy in Ottawa in order to deal effectively with our neighbour.

Freewheeling departments, provincial officials and even Cabinet Ministers could weaken our voice in Washington and complicate our strategies. As tensions grew between Ottawa and Washington in the 1970s and 1980s, the Cabinet regularly endorsed directives