

But, given the choice of hiding out and hunkering down, we reached out, decisively.

And when the war was over, our two countries led the effort to establish international agencies that might avoid the causes of war -- the League of Nations, the United Nations, the invaluable agencies they spawned.

It was no accident that the UN Charter was signed in the United States, and its headquarters located here; no accident that the idea of using soldiers to keep peace, under the UN flag, came from Canada.

And in trade, when the world economy was at its most desperate, in the 1930s, when voices everywhere were preaching protection and retreat, two countries stood against that darkening tide, and negotiated and signed an historic Most-Favoured Nation Trade Agreement.

That Agreement, signed between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister King in 1935, started the movement toward international economic cooperation that led to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the GATT.

And one could argue, therefore, that it was the foundation of the largest expansion of world trade in history.

On the environment, 76 years ago, before the issue became a trend, Canada and the United States established the International Joint Commission.

Later, in 1972, we negotiated the Great Lake Water Quality Agreement and then refined it twice again in 1978 and 1987.

We have each used the International Joint Commission to resolve environmental problems. The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement has been instrumental in reducing the levels of toxics in those waters, setting them on the course towards ecological regeneration.

This recitation of history has, of course, a point.

That point is that the friendship and cooperation of Canada and the United States have, at our best, reached beyond our fortunate continent, to build standards and institutions for the world. In a very real sense, multilateralism is a North-American invention.