

Although I have discovered that there are many around the world who think otherwise, good Canada/United States relations are not something we inherited automatically along with our North American domiciles. We have had to work at it; we must still work at it. Otherwise minor irritants, of which there must be many thousands between Canadians and Americans in the run of a year, would soon accumulate and merge into a general feeling of antipathy and even bitterness. This is the fact, and the example we can convey in our international relations.

In our dealings with the world community, there is little real difference in the ultimate goals of Canada and the United States. This is not only because we consult on and co-ordinate many of our foreign-policy initiatives. It is also because, instinctively, we perceive international problems in the same way and usually arrive independently at the same conclusions. The essential difference, which can create difficulties, is that the United States is a super-power, while Canada's ability to influence and shape events is much more limited.

Middle East leaders told me last week that the United States holds 90 per cent of the cards needed to resolve the torment of that troubled region. The same was said by some regarding Cyprus and the various African conflicts. That does not leave much leverage or influence for the rest of us, including Canada — especially when, in other places and at other times, that other super-power, the Soviet Union, plays the principal role.

It would be easy for Canada to become a mere rubber stamp for American foreign policy, especially since, as I have noted, our objectives and interests so frequently coincide. Easy, no doubt, but most unwise from the standpoints of both our countries.

Canada is a great and sovereign country in its own right. We must be free to make our own decisions and policies and to differ with the United States when we feel this to be necessary. Also, Canadian interests are not always squarely on all fours with those of the United States. There are and will continue to be times when what we are seeking, and need to achieve, will diverge from American objectives, and, when we pursue different courses, we must do so openly and with a full understanding of each others' points of view.

Canada is deeply conscious of the world-leadership burden the United States is called upon to carry. We know that in this position the interrelationship between important issues is incredibly intricate. Citizens of both our countries are not sufficiently aware sometimes that international issues are not a series of individual water-tight compartments. Proposed solutions for one problem may be perfectly logical in that case, but their application would serve only to exacerbate another equally serious difficulty. When a smaller country or region, or even groups of people within our own countries, have a special interest in only one element of the interlocking global puzzle, it is not always easy for them to comprehend the failure to advance on the particular and narrow front of their concern. They fail to see sometimes the mutual exclusivity of individual initiatives each of which may be eminently sensible in its own right.

---