

Canada has always been more acutely dependent on international order than most states. Other states have been able to ignore order or impose it. Those have not been choices for Canada. Our population is too small. Our land mass is too large. Our economy is too connected to others. We have needed order for our security, order for our trade, order for our prosperity. And we have needed to pursue it with others.

That reality has been with us always. It will be present even more in the future. For Canada, multilateralism in foreign policy is not an exercise in idealism; it is an exercise in realism. In one sense, for Canada, multilateral foreign policy is a question of choice. That choice is between success and failure.

Canada's commitment to peacekeeping also has roots in our own national experience. We are a country which was not created through revolution or war. But we are a country which has known the threat of conflict, a country which has had to struggle constantly to compromise, to hold together, and in so doing to become a community. For 26 million people to occupy the second largest piece of real estate in the world is uncommon. For a country which runs East-West to survive when its natural links run North-South has not been easy. And for a country composed of native people, two founding peoples, and many more cultures, simply to endure is an accomplishment.

But we have endured. We have successfully avoided civil war and revolution. Let me quote from one of the speeches in the Confederation debates of 1865: "We are endeavouring to adjust harmoniously greater difficulties than have plunged other countries into all the horrors of civil war.... We are striving to settle forever issues hardly less momentous than those that have rent the United States of America, and are now exposing it to all the horrors of civil war. Have we not then great cause of thankfulness that we have found a better way for the solution of our troubles than that which has entailed in other countries such deplorable results?"

What we have achieved -- and what we must now renew -- is unique -- a voluntary association of many traditions, many cultures. The accomplishment of Canada has been to demonstrate that diversity is not a blemish but a blessing. The lesson Canada brings to the world is that compromise is not a dirty word. John Holmes once said: "As managers of the unmanageable, I would stack Sir John A. or Mackenzie King up against Bismarck or Bolivar any day. If they aren't comparable to Lincoln it is because they made sure not to have his problem."

We have brought that experience to our approach abroad. That includes peacekeeping. The Canadian experience proves that