

speaking nations, Western Europe, for example. We consider the specific Canadian activities -- trade, consular protection of citizens, economic cooperation, -- which these missions support or coordinate. But there are also the wider themes of national interest which determine the direction of our global activity -- the necessity of understanding developments in various regions of the world, of finding opportunities to project Canada and Canadian official viewpoints, and of cultivating friendly relations with political leaders.

Any important decision in Canadian foreign policy is, therefore, taken in the light of a global assessment which because of our extensive operations abroad, the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa can provide. As the Minister to whose desk such questions come, I can assure you that speaking of an interdependent world or of a global diplomacy is not mere rhetoric. The factors -- foreign and domestic -- which must be taken into account in reaching a decision are complex indeed. Canada has a relatively limited population, has never exercised colonial control anywhere in the world and has taken over control of its own external policy only in the first quarter of this century. For us to conduct diplomatic operations of the scope indicated is a real indication both of the new dimensions in world affairs generally and of our own strong desire to respond properly to the more varied challenges of the contemporary world.

The United Nations has played a catalytic role in helping to bring about a phenomenal increase in the number of sovereign states. This has been, perhaps, the most important example of the process of peaceful change in history. Meanwhile, as new states proliferate, so do international institutions. The world community is giving institutional form to its permanent and varied interests. In 1965 Canada was officially represented at 118 conferences ranging in scope from the United Nations General Assembly to meetings dealing