

If Canada's new constitutional arrangements were to produce much more decentralized control over economic and foreign policy, the protection of Canadians' interests and the projection of their values in the world would be diminished.

Should the country rupture, no provincial government could justifiably claim the kind of representation which Canada now merits in international councils. Even a re-configured Canada, without Quebec, would be vastly diminished. A separate Quebec, of course, would count for much less again on all international scales. The Canadian foreign policy whole is, and will be, manifestly greater than the sum of its parts.

Canadians must think seriously about trying to deal with the United States or any other powerful country or grouping, if Canada consisted of fragmented, squabbling states with no effective construct at the centre. Fewer people in Canada would be talking much about the abstractions of sovereignty and competing fiefdoms if the United States — sure of little retaliation — decided to scrap the auto-pact, or if the European Community decided to move in, without restraint, on Canada's in-shore fisheries or international grain trade.

In a world of states trying to accommodate ethnic, linguistic and regional diversity with the demands of interdependence and integration, Canada has long been valued as one of the most successful role-models. Any Canadian constitutional outcome which is seen internationally as a failure of the Canadian experiment in tolerance, accommodation and cooperation will seriously damage the confidence, in less favoured parts of the world, that open, democratic societies can manage these challenges.

Paradoxically, it is often only from outside, in our foreign policy accomplishments and reputation in the world, that we see how strong the common interests and values among Canadians truly are, and unfortunately most of us do not get that chance "to see ourselves as others see us" often enough.

Escott Reid once wrote — "Mackenzie King in the twenties and thirties sought for a foreign policy that divided us the least. St. Laurent and Pearson in the late forties and fifties sought for a foreign policy that unites us the most." The latter tradition has been sustained and valued by generations of Canadians and, more than we realize, by the rest of the world.