

**International  
institutions**

media; in the development of our resources; and of course in the determination of our own economic structure.

Another area of change in our policy values lies in our attention to international institutions. Our early and imaginative commitment to the United Nations, the IMF [International Monetary Fund], NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], the Commonwealth and the OECD [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development], has had more recently to contend with a growing sense that these institutions are tired, exhausted, serving neither our aspirations for global stability, nor our interests as an independent nation.

Perhaps there is a latent readiness to conclude that the era of international systems and institutions is over and that a predatory and protectionist world of beggar-my-neighbour and devil-take-the-hindmost is the reality which we should emulate in future.

This attitude is clearly at odds with our missionary spirit and our dedication to world order. It reflects a time of economic troubles, of seemingly random turbulence, and of institutional overload in the global system. I believe that our fundamental commitment to international institutions continues to assert itself, but it is a sign of our maturity that our expectations have been tempered, since the postwar period, with a sense of realism.

Let me add a further point to this sketch of change and evolution in our attitude towards the world and towards ourselves. I have described Canada's demographic diversity as a significant national asset. We have prided ourselves on being an open and tolerant society.

Yet one of the most troubling questions, as we look to our values and to our future, is whether Canadian society will maintain its greatness of spirit. Racial prejudice, resentment toward newcomers, and a growing stridency in public debate on social issues, strike me as the most disturbing signs of potential erosion in the policy culture of this country.

These negative phenomena have their impact on our immigration program, our receptiveness to refugees, our attitudes towards economic assistance to developing countries; and on our international credibility and effectiveness in promoting human rights and democratic values. The more we belittle others, the more we diminish ourselves.

I have mentioned the demon of change, and there are those who say that his name is technology. Certainly, in terms of foreign policy, technology has taken us into new and uncharted areas: trans-border data flow; "grey area" weapons systems; direct broadcasting by satellite; seabed mining; STOL aircraft; Telidon; acid rain and so on.

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