

Has Canada made a difference? Of course we have! Can you imagine the French or the British or the Japanese or the Americans or even the Brazilians asking such a question? They would believe that even asking the question would tarnish the names of their heroes, undermine their legends, weaken their national spirit.

The very existence of Canada -- its languages, its cultures, its values, its tolerant spirit, its standards of behaviour -- has represented an independent voice and has constituted something different, something special, for the larger world. By freely forging a united nation based on respect for diversity, Canadians bring a special sensitivity to other problems in the world.

For proof of this claim, ask those who look to us from afar. Ask the Cypriots who have raised their children in peace because we have stood guard. Ask those Ethiopians and Bangladeshis whose children have been nourished in the face of potential starvation. Ask the democrats of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and Chile whose flame of hope we kept alive during the dark years. Or ask the Europeans, who see in Canada a society with the vitality and energy of the New World, but one that respects the values and traditions of the Old World.

Like other countries, Canada's foreign policy is driven by the need to protect and promote our national values and interests. Canada has always believed that a stable, peaceful world, based on fundamental human values, is in its own best interests. Our efforts to encourage international acceptance of moderation, tolerance and the rule of law are rooted in our own domestic traditions.

Our pursuit of political and economic security through multilateral systems based upon recognized rules is not simply self-serving. Canadians are convinced that a world so forged will also be to the advantage of the broader international community.

So perhaps a better question, a divided question, would be: Has Canada, in pursuit of its foreign policy goals, made a measurable difference to the well-being of Canadians, and, in so doing, has it had any measurable impact on the course of human history? In my view, the answer is undoubtedly "yes."

The early years of Canadian foreign policy witnessed the gradual evolution of an independent view of the world, devised by Canadians to serve Canadian rather than imperial interests.

In the early stages of this evolution, we began to take decisions critical to our own nation-building, from immigration and tariff questions to the management of our own war effort during World War I. It was indeed in the muddy and bloody trenches of that war that our mettle was tested, our character was indelibly defined, and we came of age as a people and a nation.

The Statute of Westminster itself was, in fact, a well-earned and formal codification of the reality that had developed during the early part of the century. We were by then unique, different,