

group activities such as trade or tourism which in turn have implications for official policy. Second, the public influences government policy by the presentation of its views through personal discussion, the communications media, lobbying and other forms of demonstration. Although the precise effect of any of these major areas is usually difficult to establish with precision, there is no question in my mind that popular views on international matters are important factors in the evolution of government policy.

Without abdicating its responsibility to give a lead to the public, the Canadian government is not only aware of, but also responsive to, public opinion.

If public opinion is free and articulate, comment on government policy will be critical as well as commendatory. This is to be expected. Critical comment must be seriously studied and incorporated into the government's own review of foreign policy questions.

Let me give a specific Canadian example. We regularly re-examine our defence commitments to determine whether they serve Canada's national objectives. Partly as a result of a healthy questioning by some Canadians we have recently re-assessed with special care the grounds for participating in collective security arrangements. The conclusion which we have reached is that we should continue at the present time to make an appropriate contribution to collective defence arrangements in NATO. But the point which I want to emphasize is that the Government is alive to public concern about collective defense and is prepared to give special attention to the views of individual Canadians on this important subject.