

Hence it made excellent sense for Canadians to place multilateralism at the centre of our newly emerging foreign policy. Building effective international institutions was perfectly in accord with Canada's national interests. And the pursuit of this goal was also in perfect harmony with other qualities shared by Canada's diplomats.

For the most part, this cadre of officers was idealistic and internationalist in outlook. Not a shadow of the old isolationism was to be found anywhere in the East Block (the building on Parliament Hill where External Affairs was then located.) Many in the cadre were children of the Manse, strongly anti-imperialist and anti-colonial in their attitude, imbued with a missionary spirit. They were anxious to help maintain a peaceful and secure world, to see the end of colonialism and to champion justice for the poorer nations about to emerge as the Third World. Consequently, in this early postwar period, there was a remarkable harmony between our idealism and our national interests.

Nor did the pursuit of these goals produce friction with the United States. Canada and the U.S. were partners in the enterprise of building world organizations – the United Nations (UN), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the specialized agencies – and in making them work. Subsequently, the U.S. and Canada were both architects of the most important innovation in the history of the UN – after its creation – the transfer of effective political power from the Security Council, paralysed by the Cold War, to the General Assembly.

Thanks to gifted politicians and diplomats, Canadian diplomacy was innovative, effective and much admired in those years. The growing body of memoirs of Canadian diplomats testifies to this creativity. We wanted to help make NATO into a transatlantic community and not just a military alliance. We wanted to make the Commonwealth into a multiracial organization of developed and developing nations. We wanted to make the UN an effective player in both economic and humanitarian affairs. In all these instances, we made important contributions.

In my last year as a student at Oxford, I recall mentioning to the eminent English philosopher Stuart Hampshire that I had just joined the Canadian diplomatic core. "The finest in the world," he