

Purely from the Canadian point of view, therefore, and leaving aside the vital concern we share with all humanity in finding the stable world order essential to our survival (a point I scarcely need to labour), we have a definite interest not only in the absence of hostility but in genuine co-operation. Moreover, like every other country (and, despite the vaulting ambitions of some of our visionaries to see Canada take a prominent part in every international situation, we are subject to the same sort of imperatives as every other country), Canada acts in the world and is acted upon in two ways -- as itself alone, pursuing its own unique national interests, and as an ally, a neighbour or a member of one or another group.

Obviously, there is constant interplay, even tension, between these two aspects of our international being. In a pluralistic world there is far greater scope for interplay and sometimes greater occasion for conflict. This being so, can it reasonably be argued that our commitment to a common Western cause runs counter to our true national interest?

A few years ago, it was not uncommon for fairly well-disposed people of Soviet sympathies to describe Canada as the "Poland of the West", meaning, presumably, a country allied to an overwhelmingly powerful neighbour but showing encouraging signs of independence whenever it could. With all due respect to the Polish people, with whom it is an honour to be compared, I have never been able to accept the analogy. But it throws light on the point I am trying to make -- our own conception of our place as a nation committed to the NATO Alliance in defence of the West is different from that attributed to us by the Communist countries, and this difference has an observable effect on the sort of role we can play in relations with them.

That role is also profoundly affected by another observable fact - that, as far as the Soviet Union is concerned, there is really only one non-Communist country in the world whose policy is of vital significance to it - the United States. I do not discount the importance the Soviet Union attaches to its relations with other countries - India, Japan, France are all objects of special Soviet attention at present - but in Soviet calculations the United States is the ultimate interlocutor. And who is to deny the realism of this view?

What it means is that, in the absence of understandings between the two super-powers, no stable solution is possible of the key questions of world affairs -- Germany and European security, disarmament, problems of under-development. It does not mean, however, that the only worthwhile dialogue is that between the super-powers. The Soviet Union does not believe so, evidently, as the differentiation it makes among Western states confirms. But it is logical to suppose, and experience bears this out, that a dialogue with a lesser state is more or less interesting to the Communist world to the extent that state may be, or may be thought to be, associated with a concentration of power greater than itself alone.

It is a matter of traditional wisdom that Canada's closeness in all senses to the United States has lent its views greater weight than they might always have received uttered in isolation. This is the positive aspect of our situation, on which I think it reasonable to lay greater stress at this juncture in East-West relations than on the negative aspect, that we owe our