

repeated its conviction that their selection "should in some way be related to a dispassionate appraisal of their probable effective contribution to the maintenance of security." "You will, I am sure" — Mackenzie King thought it well to add for Churchill's benefit — "appreciate how difficult it would be for Canada, after enlisting nearly one million persons in her armed forces and trebling her national debt in order to assist in restoring peace, to accept a position of parity in this respect with the Dominican Republic or El Salvador."

Such perceptions were widely shared throughout the country. For some Canadians, indeed, their Government's disclaimer of topmost status — "Canada certainly makes no claim to be regarded as a great power" — seemed to be too bashful, too reserved. "A great world power standing beside Great Britain in the British Empire" was Howard Green's vision of our postwar future. "A country large enough to have world interests," was the assessment of the *Windsor Star*. And a leading Canadian publicist, pondering "A Greater Canada among the Nations", saw our role like this:

Under the impact of war, Canada has moved up from her old status to a new stature. With her smaller population and lack of colonial possessions, she is not a major or world power like Britain, the United States or Russia. But with her natural wealth and human capacity she is not a minor one like Mexico or Sweden. She stands between as a Britannic Power of medium rank.

In short, a middle power. The term was officially employed for the first time in a despatch from the Department of External Affairs to heads of mission in the five capitals of the countries to which, on January 12, 1945, the Canadian Government made a final (and unavailing) appeal for representation on the Security Council; the exact phrase used was "a so-called middle power". The term was officially defined for the first time in a speech by R.G. Riddell in 1947: "The Middle Powers are those which by reason of their size, their material resources, their willingness and ability to accept responsibility, their influence and stability are close to being great powers."

Promotion sought

The term "middle power" came into the vocabulary of diplomacy as part of a Canadian campaign to gain promotion from the status of a small power. But that is not the only purpose for which it may be used. It can also be an instrument of demotion. It lends itself not only to aggrandizement but to disparagement as well — as in the expression "merely a middle power".

An instance of how "middle power" may be used for the purpose of demotion and disparagement was reported from Moscow in 1955 on the occasion of Pearson's visit to the Soviet Union. At a reception at the Canadian Embassy for the diplomatic corps, the Canadian and Soviet foreign ministers exchanged some significant banter. "Mr. Molotov and I ought to understand each other," said Pearson joshingly. "We belong to the same trade union but he is a much more important member than I am." "Mr. Pearson is too modest," Molotov responded. "Canada is among the great powers." When Pearson jocularly compared Canada's position between the United States and the Soviet Union to that of the ham in a sandwich, Lazar Kaganovich chimed in to suggest that "a good bridge" was a better

comparison. Nor was that the end of it. At a reception some days later, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs found himself (according to one of the reporters present) "in the position of arguing that Canada is a small, rather frail country, while the Russians argued that Canada is a big, important one . . . As Mr. Pearson pursued this line that Canada is a small nation, Molotov broke in. He said the Russians do not agree with the foreign minister. In the schools of his country, said Molotov, the children are taught to regard Canada as one of the world's major powers."

Not too much should be made of this exchange (it is not reported in Pearson's memoirs except for a fleeting reference to "flattering toasts to Canada"); it bears, indeed, a close resemblance to what George Kennan recalls as the "slightly disreputable" remarks which passed ritualistically between himself and assorted Latin American presidents some years before ("You, Mr. Kennan, are an official of the government of a great country; and I am only the President of an obscure little country"; 'Ah, Mr. President, that may be, but we are all aware that there is no connection between the size of a country and the amount of political wisdom it can produce'.") Much more significant is the deliberately depreciating analysis of Canada's place in the world put out from the Prime Minister's office on May 29, 1968, soon after Pierre Trudeau arrived there:

Canada's position in the world is now very different from that of the postwar years. Then we were probably the largest of the small powers. Our currency was one of the strongest. We were the fourth or fifth trading nation and our economy was much stronger than the European economies. We had one of the very strongest navy (*sic*) and air forces. But now Europe has regained its strength. The Third World has emerged . . .

These are the broad lines of the international environment in which Canada finds itself today. What are we proposing to do about it? We are going to begin with a thorough and comprehensive review of our foreign policy which embraces defence, economic and aid policies

Without prejudging the findings of that review, it was nonetheless possible to state in a word what its objective ought to be. The word was "realism": "Realism — that should be the operative word in our definition of international aim. Realism in how we read the world barometer. Realism in how we see ourselves thriving in the climate it forecasts." And the first requirement of realism was that "we should not exaggerate the extent of our influence upon the course of world events".

In the course of public speaking over the next few months, the Prime Minister returned again and again to this opening theme. On December 18, 1968, asked by an interviewer if Canada should revert to its postwar role as a leader of the middle powers, Mr. Trudeau demurred:

Personally, I tend to discount the weight of our influence in the world . . . I think we should be modest, much more modest than we were, I think, in the postwar years when we were an important power because of the disruption of Europe and so on. But right now we're back to our normal size as it is and I think we must realize that we have limited energy, limited resources and, as you said earlier, intellectual and (*sic*) manpower. Therefore, we must use modesty . . . We shouldn't be trying to run the world.