

did not stop residential schools and a century of ignoring clear statutory promises to the aboriginal nations who signed treaties with us. Likewise, Canadians like to think their history of good government has been corruption-free. This is not so. From the days of John A. Macdonald to recent regimes, Canadian governments have not been as good or as honest as we want them to be. Sometimes, as in our resort to the War Measures Act in 1914 and again in 1970, we have sacrificed too much freedom for the sake of order.

For better—and sometimes for worse—peace, order and good government, and the institutions that anchor this creed in our national life, have been the guarantors of our national independence and our national distinctiveness. The success of this creed makes our country one of the most sought-after destinations for migration in the world. Our capacity to resolve our conflicts peacefully means that we have survived where many other multinational, multi-ethnic, regionalized societies have failed. For all our justified concerns about corruption in government, by the standards of Transparency International, Canada remains one of the best-governed countries in the world. Finally, our commitment to human rights, tolerance and diversity is not abstract and it is not optional: given how diverse we have become, it is the very condition of our survival as a distinct people. These ideas—peace, order and good government—are not just a cluster of values. They define our national interest. They are the precondition of our national independence.

III

If this way of reading our national interest and our values is correct, what are the implications for the public policy of our country overseas? How should these values and interests drive our engagement with the external world?

To answer this question, we need to identify the global trends that most deeply impinge upon our interests as a country and to specify the particular skills we can bring to the solution of the problems that threaten “peace, order and good government” in the world at large.

Every country has to focus on what it does best, where its comparative advantage lies. My suggestion is that Canada needs to do