

East still raged on. Not surprisingly, the United Nations which they conceived and designed tended to reflect their particular interests and perspectives. The composition of the Security Council, for example, even today reflects the world of 1945. The principal members of the triumphant Grand Alliance of the Second World War sought to perpetuate their pre-eminence by permanent membership associated with a right of veto.

Even though smaller states, such as Canada, voiced their objection to this system of permanent membership and accompanying veto in the Security Council, they eventually accepted an imbalance in powers comparable to the realities of the composition of the wartime alliance and of the then envisaged post-war world. At the end of the day, the veto accorded the permanent five members was the price to be paid for the signing of the Charter. In exchange, the world saw the establishment of the United Nations as a mediatory or coercive organization mandated to maintain international peace and collective security. In effect, the two-tier system of membership guaranteed the continued participation of the great powers. One of the central weaknesses of the League of Nations was thus avoided by its successor.

When the founding Conference of the UN opened in San Francisco in the spring of 1945, Canada's reputation as a key partner in the wartime alliance, as well as the constructive role played by its delegates in the drafting of the Charter, erased any lingering memory of its unhelpful attitude towards the League of Nations. In the fullness of time, in June 1945, just after the Armistice, the Charter was signed by Louis St-Laurent and representatives of 50 other nations which had declared war against one or more of the Axis powers.

Within weeks of the birth of the UN, the Second World War ended and, within months, the Cold War began. A bitterly divided Security Council soon had to face very different problems from those which its architects had envisaged. The Cold War induced the virtual paralysis of the institution. The infant United Nations was sent reeling by the shock of massive geo-political shifts even before it reached adolescence.

During the turbulent first decade of the United Nations, Canada's approach to international affairs was redefined. Under the influence of Louis St-Laurent and Lester Pearson, the Canadian government turned its back decisively on the negative, sometimes virtually isolationist, posture it had adopted during the twenties and thirties. "Pearsonian internationalism", as it came to be known, dominated Canadian foreign policy during those years. Indeed the expression well described the self-confident, outward-looking attitude which characterised Canadian foreign policy. This approach was sustained by broad public support and robust economic growth in the country.

This positive "Pearsonian" outlook found expression, more generally, in Canada's attitude toward international economic cooperation, continental and North Atlantic defence, as well as in its unflinching support for the United