

New Wealth of Nations by Charles F. Gallagher identifies this trend:

"In a world of finite and dwindling physical assets the balance of market values has shifted, at least temporarily and perhaps for a very long period, from the ability of technology to create and develop new assets to the capacity of existing assets to command considerations that will permit the purchase of technology and the procurement of power. For long technology was joined to capital in a fruitful marriage, a happy coupling that developed material resources and created new assets. Today it is resources which have alienated the affections of capital and created conditions permitting the downgrading of technology to the status of a handmaiden serving the new connubial union. In short, skills have been reduced to a position in which they are traded at a discount relative to goods. He who has the right materials is better off than he who has the right training . . .

"Because of the revaluation and redistribution of the chips of the game, we have a rearrangement in the classification of nations today."

If this is bad news for the Science Council of Canada, it is good news for the Government of Canada. It means that Canada is exceptionally well endowed to face the worst (short of nuclear war) the future may fling at mankind, exceptionally well equipped for what has been called "the desperate misadventure we are now engaged upon", as well-prepared as any people for those dismal "human prospects" envisaged by melancholiacs who forecast global breakdown. We have what it takes, since we have all it takes.

Canada has almost sinfully bestowed upon it the sources of power, both traditional and new. The technology is there, or waiting. (We need only decide how much technology to develop for ourselves, how much to buy from others.) The manpower is there, or waiting. (We need only decide how many millions more our country needs, then pick amongst the jostling clamourers according to the criteria of our choice.) The resources are there, or waiting, too — animal, vegetable *and* mineral. Hardly a month elapses without the revelation of some new bonanza in our larder. (We need only decide how fast to develop them, how much to charge for them.)

Decline of U.S.

Finally — in part because of these two changes but only just in part — a third change that Peter Wiles has called "the declining self-confidence of the super-

powers". These are super-powers now in name only. The decline in self-confidence is most striking in the United States — for reasons that require no elaboration. (The most telling thing about "Watergate" is that it could not have happened in the Soviet Union.) "No nation can pretend to be a super-power," writes C. L. Sulzburger about his country's recent compound fractures, "when its foreign policy suffers such blows as that of the United States in Southeast and Southwest Asia, when its economy reels, its unemployment zooms, its currency staggers, and when its leadership, symbolized by a Chief Executive who chooses that moment to take time off for golf, faces its crises in paralyzed confusion."

For Canadians to exult in American misfortune for its own sake would be the grossest form of *Schadenfreude*. Not for a moment do I suggest we should. I suggest only that we do so for our own sake.

It has not been good for Canada to have been obliged to exist so long in the shadow of a luminous imperial America, whose achievements in whatever field, measured by whatever standard, have so consistently outclassed our own. On the contrary, this condition has been a prescription for crippling neurosis. America's descent from the dizzy heights of power and responsibility which under successive administrations it has occupied since the era of the Marshall Plan offers Canada a chance to stand with more assurance in the light. Only a masochist could fail to welcome such an opportunity.

The opportunity is there, or waiting. "We live in a century," the Prime Minister of Canada remarked in the presence of the Premier of China, "where, increasingly, national greatness is measured not in terms of martial grandeur or even economic accomplishment but in terms of individual welfare and human dignity. No longer is military might or political hegemony the yardstick of achievement. The true test of a government is found in its ability to provide its people with a sense of worth, of accomplishment, of fulfilment." For the first time since 1945, it has become plausible to argue that Canada's chance of passing such a test is just as good as that of the United States — perhaps even better.

A recent attempt by Peter Dobell to re-rank Canada among the nations in accordance with these new realities promotes us from "middle power" to "minor great power". But such terms as "great power", whether minor or major, have, like "middle power" itself, lost all significance and meaning. I should be content with "foremost power" — if we produce a foreign policy to match.

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