

influenced by special interest groups whose approach is narrow.

Of course, a price is paid in a democracy for the involvement of the public in foreign policy - it is not, however, a high price given the importance of this involvement. The price is what James Reston, the American columnist, has described as playing an "open hand" in the poker game of international negotiation with authoritarian societies whose card hand is kept closed. Public debate at home can restrict the flexibility of negotiators in their discussions with other countries.

A point worth noting is that "wide interest" among the general public should not be interpreted as universal interest. Surveys in other democratic and developed countries have suggested that only about 25 per cent of the adult population sustains an interest in international issues. Even with education programmes, the percentages do not seem to have risen greatly. Thus it would be utopian to expect the entire population to be vitally interested and knowledgeable on foreign policy on a continuing basis. But this does not preclude deep concern on a particular issue at a particular time - for example - the war in Vietnam. In all probability, the poll taken across the country last summer which indicated that foreign policy topped the list of important problems for more Canadians than any other single issue, reflects the deeply-felt concern among large numbers of Canadians about the continuing conflict in Southeast Asia.

The Canadian Government has welcomed the surge of interest and participation by the citizens of the country in foreign affairs.