

between the contemporary authoritarian world, and the by-gone age which I have mentioned when international affairs were regarded as one of the mysteries not to be revealed except to a chosen few who, in turn, were more than content to exercise their priestly functions in the confident knowledge that their decisions, even if disastrous, would be ratified, supported or ruthlessly enforced. For the nations of the West at least, this day has long since disappeared, and our foreign policies have come to reflect more faithfully the character and wishes of a nation's people instead of only the aspirations and designs of its governors. I might add in passing, however, that I suspect that a similar process may be beginning in Eastern Europe.

In making these generalized statements, I have perhaps implied that the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy is more perfect than is actually the case. We in Canada, just as citizens in other Western democracies, have a long way to go before a public, well-informed and fully conscious of its responsibilities, is competent to make wise collective judgements in vexed and complex matters, which nonetheless have the gravest consequences upon a people's well-being, or even upon their chances of survival. I understand, for example, that not long ago, a popular poll revealed that about ninety per cent of Canadian citizens of voting age supported NATO, but that only about six per cent had a reasonably clear idea of what NATO is, and of its functions. The same is probably true of Canadian public opinion regarding the United Nations. I offer another example: at the time of the Hungarian tragedy two years ago, there was widespread though ill-informed indignation that the United Nations did nothing whatsoever to prevent the re-enslavement of the Hungarian people, following their heroic rising against injustice and tyranny. It seemed to come as a surprise to many people that the United Nations has no forces whatsoever at its disposal, and that its majority decisions have, in practice, no sanction, apart from the intangible weight of world opinion, or apart from the responsibility which the great powers are disposed to assume in making effective the decisions of the United Nations.

Nonetheless, in spite of such popular misconceptions, and despite the lingering indifference to international affairs which they reflect, there has been in recent years a vast change for the better in the general acceptance by the Canadian people of the fact that a nation such as Canada must assume the grave responsibilities which invariably accompany the possession of wealth and strength. Since 1939, Canada and the Canadian people have assumed and have discharged the gravest of duties. It seems probable that our obligations in the future will be at least no less demanding, and will require for their proper conduct the full support of a well-informed and united people.