

Chapter IV

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE SEVENTIES

All government decisions on policy questions depend in some degree on the forecasting of events or situations likely to arise in future, whether short- or long-term. Forecasting in a field as vast and varied as foreign affairs is bound to be difficult, complicated and full of uncertainties. The variables of politics are in the broad arena of international affairs exaggerated, multiplied, diversified and often intensified in their impact. The risks of faulty or short-lived predictions run high and are compounded in an era of swiftly evolving events and technologies, even though some technological advances can be used to improve the process of forecasting. Forecasts for foreign policy purposes of necessity must be generalized. They rest on the facts and interpretations of international developments which are both subject to correction and change, and susceptible of widely differing deductions.

All this produces complex difficulties of targeting for any government wishing to set its objectives and assign priorities for policies intended to deal with specific issues arising, preferably before they become critical. The Canadian Government, moreover, must assess its various policy needs in the context of two inescapable realities, both crucial to Canada's continuing existence:

—Internally, there is the multi-faceted problem of maintaining national unity. It is political, economic and social in nature; it is not confined to any one province, region or group of citizens; it has constitutional, financial and cultural implications. While most of its manifestations have a heavy bearing on Canada's external affairs—some have already had sharp repercussions on Canada's international relations—in essence they are questions whose answers are to be sought and found within Canada and by Canadians themselves.