

English-speaking members of the Commonwealth are now in a very small minority among the association's total membership. From our fellow Commonwealth members we may, and frequently do, differ as only a cursory glance over the record of a vote on almost any issue at the United Nations will show. But while we may differ on specific issues, there are certain underlying questions on which we are not divided and this basic agreement on ideals and purposes constitutes the cement of Commonwealth relationships. The fact that these relationships are ill-defined in no way reduces their effectiveness and, indeed, a case could be made out to prove that the lack of a formal constitution and common institutions really strengthens the Commonwealth as an effective means of communicating with other nations, whether within or outside the Commonwealth, nations whose views and policies we must take into account, as they must ours, in a realistic approach to the problems of the international community in which we live.

Thus far I have concentrated attention on the factors and forces from overseas which exert a modifying effect on any tendencies we may have shown in earlier decades towards a foreign policy of freedom of action, with no commitments and no involvements. Let us now look at the continent of North America. Whether some of us like it or not, it is inevitable and inescapable that one of the strongest single influences upon our international action stems from the presence of our neighbour, the United States. By reason of the obvious facts of geography, of economic inter-dependence and of social and cultural parallels, there must emerge the clear conclusion that as far as can be seen at the present time, it would be difficult to conceive of a Canadian foreign policy which on any vital point of issue would be violently opposed to that of the United States. As in our relationship with Commonwealth nations we may differ but for the sake of the United States no less than for our own, and for the sake of the rest of the world, it is ardently hoped that the United States and Canada will never be hostile to one another. Our differences, of course, do not in any way prejudice our right and indeed our obligation to influence, to persuade or even to protest, whether publicly or in the quiet of diplomatic discussions, any action of the United States which would affect any vital Canadian interest, or endanger world peace.

From all of these factors - our relationships with NATO, the United Nations, the Commonwealth and the United States - our foreign policy has been compounded. We have come a long way from the days in which Canada longed for the isolationist haven of no commitments and no involvements, the days in which we had, in fact, no foreign policy at all. The same sort of transformation, I maintain, has been wrought in the international orientations of the nations of the