

**Foreign policy
at the service
of national unity**

A point which returns me to the allegation that the Trudovian concept of national interest is somehow mean-spirited. This is surprising because a massive increase in foreign aid, and a very strong engagement with the Third World, have been just as much the hallmark of the past 15 years of Canadian foreign policy as has any cold-eyed construction of national interests and *realpolitik*.

True, we have done our best to ensure that our foreign policy reflected our economic, cultural and security interests. We have put foreign policy very much at the service of national unity. We have acted unilaterally in protecting our maritime environment and resources, although I would add that these steps were taken only after an exhaustive search for international agreement. And we have moved to the defence of our media and of our electronic sovereignty.

But our concept of national interest has never been so narrowly construed that our dedication to the global system has seriously slackened. I think of work at the Law of the Sea Conference. Work in new fora such as the Cancun Summit on North-South relations. And participation in a range of international organizations and multilateral negotiations.

In sum, I contend that the point and counterpoint of internationalism and self-interest both have been, and will probably continue to be, an expression of our policy culture in foreign affairs.

**Nuclear-weapons-
control a priority**

I have now arrived at my fourth and final theme, which is to take a look at our policy culture when projected into the future. Which elements will change? What choices will we face? How will we manage the shocks and surprises which the future undoubtedly holds? If Lester Pearson, in 1934, could spot nuclear energy as the miracle and the menace of the future, what should we be keeping our eye on?

Much as one would prefer to forecast the arrival of new social or political ideas promoting world order, peace and prosperity — and we may be wrong not to — I fear it is the world of technology which will provide the most powerful motor of change.

I would venture to suggest that no single breakthrough in the coming decades can out-rank the destructive power of annihilation unlocked by the continuing development of nuclear weapons. We may find other ways of destroying ourselves and our species, such as punching great holes in the biosphere, melting down the polar ice-cap, or turning the earth into Swiss cheese by deep drilling. But none seems likely to rival the proliferation of nuclear weapons whose use is threatened as an instrument of state power.

To control these weapons, and to arrest their spread to other nations, will be an overriding priority for the foreseeable future, at least until such time as the security of any one nation can be maintained without the promotion of insecurity among others.
