

It is true that some of these activities are now what one might call normal for a developed nation in an increasingly interdependent world. I believe, however, that, over and above any trend of the times, we have chosen as an essential ingredient in an independent foreign policy a considerable degree of activity directed towards the creation of a more stable, peaceful and prosperous world.

This aspect of our policies has been particularly apparent in our commitment to peace-keeping activities in the United Nations and in our strong support for the survival of a multi-racial Commonwealth, in our contribution to the founding of NATO and our emphasis on the possibility that it might provide the foundation of an eventual transatlantic association which would lead to political and economic co-operation as well as defence co-operation. We could not expect to make a decisive intervention in world problems alone, but we believed that a strong effort in company with others at the appropriate times would both give expression to our Canadian views and would serve the interests of the world community.

We have referred increasingly to our "middle-power" role. It is not easy to divide nations into categories in these terms. It is not easy to define the ingredients, military, political or economic, which make up "power" or diplomatic effectiveness in international affairs. Nevertheless, it is clear that Canada has in a moderate degree some of the attributes which have always supported international activity and these, combined with traditional or newly-acquired associations and with a strong belief in the efficacy of collective action, have enabled us to play a constructive part in world affairs.

World Trends

Our contribution in this area was, until fairly recently, made against a background of a relatively fixed relation among the super-powers and great powers. The United Nations could do little with respect to the central problems at issue between the blocs which emerged as the result of the power relation and clash of ideologies after the Second World War.

The United Nations did, however, react to this situation by attempting to overcome, to some extent, the inability of the Security Council, composed of the great powers, to act as it was supposed to do under the Charter. The greater role of the General Assembly in peace keeping, for example, and the personal initiatives of the Secretary-General were responses to the desire of the majority of members to act for peace. Canada made its contribution, along with other medium powers, in situations in which the great powers could not act.

General international conditions have, however, begun to change in the past few years in the direction of what many commentators call "polycentrism", or the growth of more centres of power, influence and political initiative in world affairs. The process is a complex one and I shall only remind you of some of the contributing factors.

In the early 1960s, most of the remaining colonies in the world became independent and it became clear that the new and unaligned nations were not going to choose either "East" or "West" in the ideological sense.