

In a misguided move, the Diefenbaker government sought to achieve a quick UN agreement on disarmament in order to allow it to resolve a dangerous (and ultimately fatal) division in its own ranks on the issue of a nuclear role for our armed forces. Aimed at forcing the U.S. hand, it produced one of the worst periods of tension in our relations with the United States.

By the late 1960s, Canada's vocation for international organization was at its high point. At the UN, Canada was instrumental in contributing credibility to the very idea of a middle power. And we were comfortable in our role as a middle power, forming alliances on key votes with Sweden, Austria, Mexico, Egypt, Yugoslavia, Mexico and other middle powers, working assiduously for disarmament, trying to dull the edges of the instruments of the Cold War, seeking compromise and advocating moderation, yet with our roots firmly grounded in the Western camp.

To some Canadians, there was, at times, something a little too strenuous in our efforts to be a leader of the middle camp, something a little presumptuous about the way our politicians, media and others regarded Canada as the virtuous torchbearer for a better world. But, to some other Canadians, our efforts did not seem strenuous enough and were damaged by our too close association with the U.S. and our lack of neutrality.

These factors, together with a growing nationalist sentiment in Canada, led to a sense of impatience about our international role, a certain cynicism about our Boy Scout internationalism, about Pearsonism without Pearson, about overreacting, about being too close to the Americans, about the absence of successes as in former days, and so on.

Against this background, the newly elected government of Pierre Trudeau undertook a foreign policy review. The results of this effort, laid out in the six booklets of *Foreign Policy for Canadians*, struck many in the Canadian academies, in the media and in official circles, as rather strange or even eccentric. Packaged in the trendy language of the time, the report was criticized for weakness in its commitment to internationalism and for placing too great a stress on the national interest rather than on a better world. And why, it was asked, was there no separate document on relations with the United States?