

smaller group claimed that our greatest weakness was our effort to appear different from our major ally — “a bad case of Scandinavianitis,” one complained.

Canada's Ambassadors

The second largest group was critical of Canada's “low profile.” It was too quiet, they frequently said, too withdrawn, too unassertive, too inactive or too indefinite. (These responses, it should be noted, were given before Stephen Lewis became Canada's UN Ambassador.) One interviewee said Canada suffered in the UN by not being one of the LDCs (Less Developed Countries); a couple of other complained that our weakness lay in being intimidated by the LDCs. Several said our greatest weakness was strong partiality for Israel. Others said we were excessively anti-Soviet. Several held that we were too spread out over a large number of issues. One said the greatest weakness was “proximity” to Ottawa, and the consequent necessity to deal with a flood of visitors expecting attention. (As the recipient of many mission favours, this author understood, and blushed.)

We asked respondents to distinguish, if they could, Canadian and US diplomacy in the UN. Only a handful said they could see no difference, but a sixth considered it to be trivial. The largest portion, a third, noted Canada's greater understanding of the LDCs and generosity towards them. A half that portion had observed Canada's greater support of arms control. Other small minorities noted Canada's more positive stand on the Law of the Sea, greater “balance” in dealing with the Middle East, and stronger support for human rights and other humanitarian measures. A dozen respondents stressed that Canada's UN diplomacy was less rigid or ideological; it was also seen as friendlier and more concerned to build bridges. Unlike the United States, we were told, “Canada really believes in the UN, supports it, and uses it.”

One diplomat could detect *no* similarity between the Canadians and Americans except that “they speak the same language.” A considerable majority clearly could distinguish between the two diplomacies, in both style and content. Almost all of the stated differences were in Canada's favor, and many went out of their way to stress that they saw Canada as independent. Difficult to ignore, however, was the observation of a much respected Western ambassador that “Canada, like fifty-six others, hides behind the US veto.” It is easier to be a nice guy if you are confident that someone else will block unpleasant measures.

Is the US a stigma?

“Influence in a group or groups,” it will be recalled, was ranked second among the factors of overall influence in the UN, and Canada's primary association is almost inescapably with the US and NATO. When we asked: “Would Canada's diplomacy in the UN be more effective, or less effective, if it ceased to be an ally of the United States?” several nonaligned representatives could not conceive of Canada's doing anything so rash. Almost half thought that Canada would gain in influence, at least within the UN. The