

In the modern world, the belief that foreign policy should be limited to economic, commercial and political concerns is viewed everywhere with a certain degree of suspicion. More and more, it is seen as a subtle veil for obscuring imperial and exploitative interests, not only between developing and developed countries, but also among the developed countries themselves. In fact, in retrospect, it is easy to see how limiting foreign policy in this way was a major contributor to global tensions and world wars, since the human element was missing from international relations, thereby confining these relations largely to matters of material gain. This is not to say that economic and political objectives are not extremely important objectives in a country's foreign policy, or that countries do not have a great deal to gain from relations in this field. Rather it is easy to say that exclusive preoccupation with these matters presents a distorted view of what countries are really all about and why they need to relate to one another. In the modern world, there is more and more pressure to introduce the human element into international relations, and what better way to do this than to construct positive and lasting cultural relationships among countries. For human expression is the essence of all aesthetic and intellectual activity - the sum and substance of a society's greatest achievements. Whether it is in the muted motions of the mime or the inventive imagery of the poet, the human element glows through every cultural act.

Finally, due to the revolution in cultural development which has swept the world in recent years, most countries have many more activities to export to other countries as well as import from other countries. It is no longer true that countries possess little of aesthetic or intellectual value worth exporting. In fact, precisely the converse is true. With the passing of each year, there is more and more of significance available in all countries - orchestras, theatre and dance companies, exhibitions, films, sports organizations, scholarly accomplishments, architectural triumphs and the like - with which to erect impressive programs of cultural relations with other countries. As a result, there is scarcely a country anywhere in the world that is not in a position to make a forceful contribution to world cultural relations.

Canada offers an extremely interesting case study in this regard. Thirty years ago, it is highly debatable whether Canada could have mounted a forceful program of cultural relations, since the quality of creative achievements was sparse and the quantity of these achievements left much to be desired. Today, Canada does not have to take a back seat to any country in the world in terms of the quantity or the quality of its creative offerings - thanks to the efforts of countless numbers of artists, academics, craftsmen, athletes, corporate executives, politicians, civil servants and citizens. The argument that Canada does not have an adequate stock of creative works to provide a forceful and dynamic cultural relations program can no longer be taken seriously or used as an excuse to keep these relations in low profile in Canadian foreign policy. The phenomenal growth of this field over the last few decades - objectively assessed both inside and outside the country - means that Canada now possesses a sufficient stock of high-quality offerings to make its presence felt in every corner of the globe. Without doubt, the time has come for a quantum leap in Canada's international cultural relations - a leap that will place these relations on exactly the same footing as economic, commercial and political relations in the country's foreign policy. Such a leap would not only be extremely beneficial to Canada's burgeoning pool of creative talents, permitting them to present their creative accomplishments to world audiences; it would also be beneficial to Canadians and other peoples in their efforts to learn more about each other