

On September 10-11 1995, the Second Annual National Forum met in Toronto to consider international institutions in the twenty-first century and the implications for Canadian policy. We met in a year of sombre anniversaries: a half century since the end of World War II, a war which fascist governments turned the power of the state against civilians as well as other states and committed acts of unprecedented brutality. In 1995 we commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the hard-won victory of freedom in a war in which 50 million died. We also commemorated the unleashing of the atomic bomb and remembered again that future global conflicts could put humanity and civilization at risk.

This year also marks the anniversary of hope in a new beginning. Fifty years ago, allied leaders gathered to create a new set of institutions dedicated to the prevention of aggression, the promotion of prosperity, and the creation of economic and social well-being for the peoples of the world. It is this work in progress that we celebrate in this fiftieth anniversary year of the United Nations and its family of institutions.

Within a few years of World War II, the architecture of the new institutional order was in place. A new trade regime, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was established in 1948 to avoid the destructive rounds of protectionism in the 1930s that inflicted so much human suffering and contributed to the outbreak