

between the diplomats and the treasury led to the typically Canadian phenomenon of opening embassies and then closing them, then opening them again and closing them – what might be called the Ecuador Embassy syndrome. The battle continues to this day, when we have 146 offices throughout the world.

Thus, though not by any means a global power, Canada nevertheless came to practise a global foreign policy and sought consistently through the decades to play a global role. A story that is probably apocryphal might help explain this phenomenon.

I heard long ago that an eminent member of the Toronto establishment, Dean Acheson, once said that the problem with Canada was that it was a regional power without a region. I tried to find the actual quotation, poring through all possible sources, but failed to trace it. I did manage to find his unkind comments about Canadian high-mindedness and hypocrisy, but no reference to Canada as a regional power without a region. But if Acheson didn't say this (I have heard it attributed also to Buckminster Fuller and Herman Kahn), he could well have done so because it seems to sum up perfectly the geographic reality underlying Canadian foreign policy.

The United States is our region. That is the reality.

The primary consequence of this simple fact is that, as a counterweight, to find lebensraum, so to speak, we directed our efforts and creative energies to a foreign policy based on a presence and role in every other region and in every international organization. The Commonwealth, where the U.S. had no presence, was a typical example. Globalism, multilateralism, universalism, and an active role in international organizations: these mainstreams of our foreign policy flowed naturally from our need for balance in the external forces shaping our national destiny.

The secondary consequence of the "regional power without a region" dictum is that, if there was, for many years, one area on the face of this globe that Canada tended to neglect, it was Latin America – the basic reason being that it was the backyard of the U.S. and, hence, not a natural area to seek counterweight. We kept very clear of the Organization of American States (OAS) and did