

Canada-U.S. Relations: Options for the Future

By Mitchell Sharp
Secretary of State for External Affairs

The options

- Canada can seek to maintain more or less its present relationship with the United States with a minimum of policy adjustments;
- Canada can move deliberately toward closer integration with the United States.
- Canada can pursue a comprehensive long-term strategy to develop and strengthen the Canadian economy and other aspects of its national life and in the process to reduce the present Canadian vulnerability.

In the review of Canadian foreign policy which the Canadian Government published in 1970 under the title *Foreign Policy for Canadians*, the challenge of "living distinct from, but in harmony with, the world's most powerful and dynamic nation, the United States" was described as one of two "inescapable realities, both crucial to Canada's continuing existence" in the context of which Canadian policy needs — domestic and external — must be assessed. The other was the "multi-faceted problem of maintaining national unity".

If the importance of this unique relationship is such as to affect the whole of Canada's foreign policy, it is in turn influenced by the nature of the world environment, and of the relations the United States and Canada have with other countries. As was recognized in the foreign policy review, and has been dramatically illustrated by more recent developments, the postwar international order is giving way to a new pattern of power relations. The preponderant position of the two super-powers, the United States and the U.S.S.R., is being reduced by the emergence of other major power centres. China, with its vast population and immense potential, has emerged from its long isolation, achieved the status of an important nuclear power, and taken its place in the community of nations. Western Europe is making historic strides towards unity through the enlargement and development of the Eu-

ropean Economic Community. Japan has developed as a modern, industrial giant in Asia. Confrontation is giving way to negotiation and accommodation in East-West relations and major progress has been achieved on the road toward a political settlement in Europe.

In this evolving new world situation, enlarged opportunities are opening up for Canada and the United States to extend and broaden their relations with Communist countries and with the developing world, while continuing to develop their ties with their more traditional political and trading partners. These major changes will undoubtedly have a bearing on Canada-U.S. relations in the years ahead and on the option that may be open to Canada in particular.

The Canada-U.S. relationship, as it has evolved since the end of the Second World War, is in many respects a unique phenomenon. It is by far our most important external relationship, but it is more than an external relationship. It impinges on virtually every aspect of the Canadian national interest, and thus of Canadian domestic concerns.

Because of the vast disparity in power and population, it is also inevitably a relationship of profoundly unequal dependence; the impact of the United States on Canada is far greater than Canada's impact on the United States.

Some two decades ago, Lester B.