

Rivalry between the Soviet Union and China is one of the root causes for the slow and hesitant Soviet rapprochement toward the West. There are others -- growing self-confidence on the part of the Soviets, their acceptance as a power with world-wide interests which has reduced their sense of being an embattled fortress, their growing need for Western technology and increasing trade between the socialist and market economies.

Canada has been playing a quiet but effective role in the search for détente. In NATO we have been leaders in the move from confrontation to negotiation. As we welcome President Nixon's planned visit to Moscow this year we remember that Mr. Pearson, then in the portfolio I now hold, visited Moscow in 1955, sixteen years ago at the beginning of the thaw. I was fortunate to be with him and helped to negotiate the first trade agreement between our two countries.

For some years we have worked carefully but steadily to increase our contacts with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. There have been many ministerial visits in both directions, trade agreements and exchange agreements of various kinds have been reached, to the benefit of all concerned. Looked at in perspective, the visit Mr. Trudeau paid to the Soviet Union and Mr. Kosygin's return visit to Canada last year did not signal a departure in Canadian policy but rather a logical step in a process, taken at the right time, the time when the Soviet Union was clearly signalling its wish for better relations with the countries of the West, not least with the two great states of North America.

By finding, after a long, delicate and demanding process of negotiation a formula for recognition of the People's Republic of China, Canada broke the log-jam and opened the way for Peking to take the China seat in the General Assembly and on the Security Council. This is not just the Canadian view, it is a view held widely in the world.

The bi-polar world with the United States at one pole and the Soviet Union at the other has passed into history. It was going already as contacts between East and West multiplied and as confrontation gave way to the phase of negotiation that may yet usher in an era of co-operation. The arrival of China on the world scene presents us with a triangle of forces. Mr. Chou En-lai has said that China's intentions are peaceful. China is determined, however, to become a major nuclear power and will do so. China has publicly repudiated the super-power role. But at the United Nations and in the world at large this role is being accorded to it. I am interested to note that the "Economist" of London refers without comment or explanation to the three super-powers.