

also works. One lesson of our history is that when we pursue an independent foreign policy—over Cuba, over China—we both serve values and we also serve our interests. Our relations with China and with Cuba have not always been popular with others, but they have allowed us to play a role in these countries which has enhanced both our commercial and our political interests.

Multilateral commitments are rightly held to be essential for any mid-power like Canada, but we neglect independence—going our own way, taking a lead—at our peril. Supporting multilateral institutions doesn't always mean singing in the choir. Sometimes we have to take a solo, and we should not be afraid to let our voice ring out. We sang solo on landmines, on human security and on the responsibility to protect and on the Montreal consensus. Other countries joined in descant, but our solo was heard and made a difference. The deeper, if unpopular truth is this: multilateralism is not a value in itself; it is valuable to the extent that it allows us to make our voice heard and our influence felt. We seek to be heard, not just so that we can indulge in the pleasure of hearing those distinctive Canadian vowel sounds, but in order to safeguard our independence and increase our national power.

It is an abiding Canadian illusion to suppose that we can maintain influence without power, just as it is an illusion to think that the sheer size of our economy will always guarantee us a seat at the tables of influence. There are countries with large economies that count for little in the world's counsels. Soft power is not a substitute for the harder varieties. We will not have influence unless we have power, and we will not have power unless we maintain capabilities. We cannot have the capabilities we need—and these range from a strong diplomatic service, an effective intelligence service, and a combat-capable counter-terrorist and peace-enforcement force—unless we invest significantly greater resources from our national budget. We will not be powerful and we will not have influence, therefore, unless we have political leadership that is unafraid to challenge the Canadian electoral preference for being nice on the cheap.

Canadians will only make these investments for the sake of something vital. Our sovereignty is vital, and in a globalizing world, it is more important than ever, since it is effective government in Canada