

such as human rights, to develop something like the kind of political community that Canada has already evolved.¹⁵

Any Canadian constitutional outcome which is seen internationally as a failure of the Canadian experiment in tolerance, accommodation and cooperation will seriously damage the confidence, in less favoured parts of the world, that open, democratic societies can manage these challenges. Together with the direct value placed on Canada's international representation and participation in confronting global challenges, this is an important interest in the evolution of the Canadian state shared by Canada's closest international partners and others around the world.¹⁶

It is obviously not through a common ethnic or tribal identity that Canada has stayed together or will stay together. Canada is something much more daring and fragile among the nations — it is in fact a diverse community of common interests and common values. Paradoxically, it is often only from outside, in our foreign policy and in our accomplishments and reputation in the world, that we see how strong the common interests and values among Canadians truly are, and unfortunately most of us do not get that chance “to see ourselves as others see us” often enough.

One other benefit that Canadians could now gain by looking around the world is to strip away the weary, seductive illusion that a national divorce would suddenly make coexistence and cooperation either unnecessary or easy. Following any such divorce, with all the pain, hard feeling, and economic setback it would inevitably bring, today's Canadians would be faced again with all the same challenges of living and working together. The only difference is that this would then be through the primitive mechanisms of international relations rather than the much superior, if still imperfect, institutions of the Canadian federation.

Our national crisis is not new, nor are its links to our foreign policy. A prescription of national introversion and timidity for Canada would help to kill the patient, and so would a foreign policy that accepted show over substance, sizzle over steak. Canadians know their own interests and their own values, and they know that their foreign policy, with mercifully few stumbles, has served them well and proudly, regardless of their political party allegiance, their mother-tongue, home region, or culture.

The world will change more and so will Canada, and it is worth recalling how our foreign policy evolved to the legacy we carry today. Escott Reid once wrote — “Mackenzie King in the twenties and thirties