

democracy is as appealing as we like to claim, sooner or later it will materialize on its own.

*Exhortation 6:* In the same vein, we need to remember that attempting to propagate our way of life abroad is an imperial enterprise – and no less so because we claim that our purposes are guided by what we regard as universal principles. There was a time, not so very long ago, when Canadians almost everywhere – inside government and out – believed that ambitions of this sort were typical of the foreign policy behaviour of the United States (and perhaps that of the European empires of an earlier time), but were happily absent from the diplomacy of Canada, which was guided by understandings of a more empathetic sort. The perception was not entirely accurate, but there was a measure of truth in it all the same, and in the U.N. and elsewhere the practice contributed to the effectiveness of our foreign service. Perhaps there was a grain of wisdom here that we should now recall.

*Exhortation 7:* Coming closer to home, our political leaderships, and more especially the manipulative political operators by whom they are most immediately staffed, should be wary of assuming that their intricate knowledge of what drives politics in Canada equips them to understand what drives politics abroad. Presumably they do not wish to emulate the political journalists on American public affairs talk shows, who can dissect the intricacies of manoeuvres inside the Washington beltway in awesome detail, but who sound like mindless adolescents in a schoolyard when they discuss the behaviour of the Chinese, or the North Koreans, or even the more familiar Europeans.

In concrete terms, and while recognizing that the responsibility for last-say decision-making, and for taking the imperatives of domestic politics appropriately into account, rests quite properly with political authorities, the latter need to listen very carefully to their officials in deciding on what to do overseas, and to make sure that these officials have done the homework that the politicians cannot possibly do themselves. (As an aside, I remember years ago interviewing Paul Martin, Sr., and listening to his account of why he felt the Cabinet as a whole was not equipped to deal with foreign affairs. Conducting Canada's external relations was not, he argued, like dealing with transport policy, but required a subtle understanding of circumstances abroad with which his colleagues were completely unfamiliar, and about which they could not be professionally advised. His covetous handling of his portfolio made him