

A RECIPE FOR WORLD INFLUENCE

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THE history of Canadian foreign policy is relatively simple: Before the First World War it was determined in London; in the interwar years it was isolationist, except when we were supporting the British (which we did even when this conflicted with our national interest); and during the Second World War and the Cold War it was directed at our maintenance of international peace and security, as a NATO member and as a leading middle power in the UN seeking to broker solutions.

What should Canada's foreign policy be in the years ahead? This will depend on our interests and values. But it will also depend on a great unknown: the kind of international order that will prevail in the next century.

How can one define the post-Cold War environment? Only a decade old, this reality has defied the prophets by failing to produce a more harmonious "new international order." It has produced, instead, an international landscape unprecedented in modern history. The post-Cold War system is characterized by the most asymmetrical distribution of power since, perhaps, the

During the Cold War, Canada enjoyed considerable influence as a middle power. What are the defining characteristics of the post-Cold War world and how do they affect Canadian interests abroad? What steps can Canada take to ensure a prominent voice in world affairs in this new century?

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Roman Empire. The U.S. alone occupies commanding heights in all fields of advanced technology. The U.S. stock market represents more than half the total capitalization of the global market. Meanwhile, the economic decline of Russia continues unabated, European economic growth is stalled and much of Asia is in economic turmoil. U.S. military power won the war in Kosovo, and all of America's allies (and enemies) know it. U.S. military power pulls farther and farther ahead of its friends', many of whose leaders talk wistfully about the importance of their "soft power." Thanks to U.S. hegemony, NATO has transformed itself from a defensive alliance into the primary peacekeeping force in the world, while the United Nations becomes increasingly marginalized.

But the asymmetrical concentration of power is not the only unusual feature of the post-Cold War era. There are others:

- The emergence of a new Zeitgeist. Human rights and humanitarianism have become dominant public concerns, and consequently there is a growing tendency to reject national sovereignty as a legal wall behind which atrocities can be committed.
- Civil wars and the disintegration of states. Internal conflicts, not interstate aggression, are now a paramount threat to international peace. So, too, is the proliferation of states possessing nuclear weapons and of rogue states with access to weapons of mass destruction.
- The growth of a judicialized approach to state behaviour. Some examples of this phenomenon are the rise of judicial procedures in the new World Trade Organization, the establishment of an International Criminal Court and the proliferation of ad hoc tribunals to prosecute crimes against humanity.

Canadian foreign policy has veered away from traditional international security concerns and towards the objectives of trade enhancement and the promotion of "human security," with little to connect the two. No real purpose is served by trying to embrace them in some overarching general strategy, such as the pursuit of a human security agenda; some of our objectives are selfish, some not.

If, in this new century, Canadian interests and the international environment do not shift dramatically, we can probably identify a mix of objectives — some economic, some political, some humanitarian — as the basis of our foreign policy. Among them are likely to be the global pursuit of Canadian economic advantage; the achievement of more secure access to U.S. markets; and the ability to contribute to peacekeeping initiatives, the protection of human rights and the alleviation of poverty.

Whether Canada achieves these goals will depend largely on one factor: the influence we are able to bring to bear beyond our borders. This, in turn, will depend on whether we learn to appreciate the assets we have at our disposal and on how well we use them.

Foremost among these assets is our privileged relationship with the United States. Our ability to influence U.S. foreign policy far surpasses in importance any other manner in which we might seek to affect the course of international events. The Canadian voice is listened to with respect in the U.S. corridors of power; it is likened to the voice of a family member. Canadians make an unpardonable error if they fail to realize this.

Another key asset, often underrated by Canadians, is Canada's historical and cultural affinity with Europe. Over the years, most Canadian political leaders have been uncomfortable in dealing with the Europeans, including even the British. They have seriously underestimated the significance of the emergence

of the European superpower. Few international initiatives will go far without its support. A prime example of our tendency to waste this asset was our provocative behaviour in the fisheries dispute with Spain, which damaged our relationship with the Union for an extended period.

A third asset is a Canadian population that is internationalist in outlook and sympathetic to humanitarian considerations. This places Canada in a strong position to contribute to the major global challenge of the new millennium: defining the scope of humanitarian interventions and making them more effective. But to capitalize on this position, Canada needs to follow a consistent approach to recognizing human rights. The current government has not always done this. (Although it deserves credit for recent efforts to distance itself from the oppressive Castro regime in Cuba.)

Equally important, the Canadian public must begin to understand that without the necessary investment in "hard power," i.e., military capability, our efforts to play a significant role in humanitarian interventions are likely to be regarded more as posturing than as a serious national commitment.

There is no element more critical to influence in foreign policy than the human resources employed to design and conduct it. Knowledge of foreign languages, cultures and history; analytical skills; excellent judgement refined through sustained experience — these are the essential ingredients of a recipe that will produce influential diplomats and foreign-policy advisors. Alas, the recipe is rarely followed these days. *We* can speak with a loud voice in the world, but if we have nothing intelligent or constructive to say, who will listen?

Finally, there is the strength of our legal tradition. As distinctions break down between national sovereignty and domestic jurisdiction, as concern over international criminal

behaviour grows, as international economic behaviour increasingly constrained by quasi-judicial review, one of the foremost instruments of influence will be a nation's jurists, legally trained diplomats and judicial tradition.

Throughout most of the 20th century, international law was marginalized; this is now rapidly changing. It is noteworthy that Canada's record before the World Trade Organization in recent times has not been good. Once again, if we wish to see our values and interests promoted on the international stage, Canadians must be ready to invest in developing an outstanding cadre of experts in the field of international law.

Of course, nurturing such assets and using them well is not glamorous, nor is it the stuff of headlines. But it is the stuff of influence, without which Canadians will not make a difference in the world.

