

The Davey Lecture

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Check Against Delivery

Introduction

It is very generous of the Davey family to invite me to speak this afternoon. Keith Davey is a Liberal's liberal, a man of enormous political achievements and human qualities, a legend of Canadian politics. The closest I, myself, got to politics in my public service career was writing speeches—some 300 hundred of them-- for then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, a Progressive Conservative, and a man who had some partisan attributes and political success himself. I, also, wrote a few speeches along the way for Prime Minister Trudeau and for Foreign Ministers Mark MacGuigan, Joe Clark and Lloyd Axworthy.

Politics aside, it is a privilege for me to render homage to the great Canadian for whom this lecture is named. And I am very pleased to have the opportunity to do so. Not least, because after 38 years of exercising the discretion required of Public Servants, much of it spent putting words into the mouths other people, it is liberating to put words into my own mouth and to say what I think. I only hope that my words will be worthy of the man we are honouring today and of the distinguished Davey lecturers who have preceded me.

My Davey Lecture is addressed principally to the young men and women in the audience this afternoon, and beyond, to today's and tomorrow's generation. If the older folks in the audience get something out of it, too, so much the better.

I will discuss the yin and yang of international relations—that is, the United Nations and the United States, drawing on experience in both places. And I will offer *advice* on how Canada should cope with these two flawed but indispensable features of global governance. For a sixty-something, late-blooming, minor, public figure with a microphone and an audience, offering advice is an irresistible temptation. But more than a lecture, I am delivering a message from my generation or at least from a survivor of my generation (so far) to you, to today's students and tomorrow's leaders.

Overview

The message is simple: "It's the world, stupid! Deal with it." Because you can either deal with it or you can hope for the best and let it deal with you.

The world is a difficult and dangerous place but also an extraordinarily promising and rewarding one. One way or another, it will intrude into your lives, on its own timetable. When asked the most difficult problem he faced as Prime Minister of Britain, Harold Macmillan responded, "Events, old boy, events"! Prime Minister Tony Blair echoed the thought when he said,

Nations, even ones as large and powerful as the USA, are affected profoundly by world events; and not affected in time or at the margins but at breakneck speed and fundamentally.

Global governance matters My parents' generation—what former NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw called the greatest generation, and he may have been right—knew what dangers the world held. An ungoverned, multi-polar world unleashed a war that took the lives of 60 million people. My parents' generation knew there had to be a better way, and they created the UN to save themselves from the scourge of another war, to paraphrase the UN Charter.

My *own* generation, for its part, survived the two super-power world, where each had the nuclear capacity to destroy the other, and all the rest of us, many times over. Not incidentally, they still do. I remember as if it were yesterday the under-the-desk and the shield-your-eyes drills that my school conducted regularly, futile though everyone knew they would be if nuclear war ever happened. We had seen the bleak pictures of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And we all knew what the Strategic Air Command was intended to do and that NORAD's job went well beyond tracking Santa Claus.

Throughout this period UN membership tripled, as former colonies gained their independence, and their UN membership, as well, with a helping hand from Paul Martin Sr., then Canada's foreign minister. And, in most cases, these new countries, ill-prepared by their histories of colonialism and slavery, assumed their places at the bottom of the world's poverty rankings, where many remain.

Globalization accelerated after the war on the back of the communications and transportation revolutions and began to spread prosperity, albeit unevenly, to places that had never experienced it before. Nevertheless, for all the unfairness, and there has obviously been unfairness within countries and between them. My generation acquired a standard of living and quality of life my parents could scarcely have hoped for.

Meanwhile, the world community steadily laid the legal basis for international law, governance and human rights, mostly through the United Nations. My generation came to political leadership as the Cold War was ending and communism was collapsing. The West, with the US in the lead, won the Cold War without firing a shot—at least not at the Russians. And, as the late John Kenneth Galbraith said on this podium in the inaugural Davey Lecture in 1998, “the age of presumed choice as between alternate economic systems is over”; the market system prevailed.

At the same time, we saw our hope for a “new world order” miscarry, as conflicts long obscured by the Cold War emerged with the thaw. A whole new taxonomy of place names came at least partly to define our age—Srebrenica, Rwanda, Kosovo, Angola, the Congo, Sierra Leone Darfur, Abu Ghraib. And a whole new

vocabulary had to be created to give current meaning to man's inhumanity to man, and woman --child soldiers, blood diamonds, ethnic cleansing, Al Qaeda, regime change, improvised explosive device, Islamophobia. These have not, of course, been the whole story of our times—other names, also, define us, not the least being Microsoft, Google, iPod and Blackberry. But, the genius we learned to apply to life-style we seemed incapable of marshalling governance.

And “never again” kept happening again, and again and it is still happening, even while the communications revolution makes it impossible for us to claim ignorance, although we try to turn a blind eye.

Seemingly out of the blue on 9/11, but with more warning than many would like to credit, international terrorism literally crashed into our lives. Regrettably, our super-power ally, grievously wounded and deeply offended, responded with a unilateral course of actions that only multiplied its injuries, destroyed its moral standing for years, possibly even generations, to come and endangered the rest of us in the process.

Meanwhile, in another part of the forest, two new mega powers were emerging, China and India, with the populations, the economies and the military, especially the nuclear capabilities, to match. Other major players are re-taking their own places in the political firmament, including Russia and the European Union, as well as Brazil, and still other actual or potential nuclear weapons states.

To keep things in perspective, and not to succumb totally to the rhetorical temptations of pessimism, the tribulations of Africa notwithstanding, on the positive side of the ledger

- the world has never been richer,
- technology has never been so powerful,
- medicine has never been so advanced,
- People have never been better educated.
- And Canada has never been wealthier, a point to remember when you are told that an effective foreign policy is unaffordable.

It remains the case, nonetheless, that America's unipolar moment, the term coined by Charles Krauthammer in 1990, is passing into history. That is not to say that the US is going rapidly the way of the Roman Empire—in the first place, America is not an empire, certainly not in the usual sense, notwithstanding the ambitions of the neo-cons. Most Americans are not at all interested in empire. According to the 9/11

commission report, the total number of undergraduate degrees granted in Arabic in all U.S. colleges and universities in 2002 was six. Young Americans are evidently not preparing themselves for lives governing the dusty, far-flung outposts of empire. Nor is the United States wasting away, as the members of the “Decline” school in US academe had predicted in the Eighties it would in the face of Japanese competition. Still, a new multipolar world is emerging, with the potential to increase the destruction caused by the last multi-polar world exponentially, putting an even higher premium on governance.

If all this were not challenge enough for the next generation of Canadians, the climate is changing, disease is mutating and pandemics are threatening, and the treaty regime that is meant to manage the nuclear danger is under assault. Meanwhile, the capacity of the UN to meet all of these demands is in question. And no better alternative exists, or is likely to.

I am sorry to admit that this is the earth that my generation is bequeathing to you, to the young men and women of Victoria College. But, ready or not, like it or not, you are on a one way voyage into the political unknown. And, as a glimpse at your tuition bill will confirm, it will not be an all-expenses-paid trip. Fortunately, you are not alone--the people who brought you this world, people like me (and Ambassador Wright), are happy to give you advice on what you should do with it.

The United Nations; Irrelevant or Indispensable?

The United Nations remains the principal instrument of international governance, often more respected for what it represents than for what it does. I know first-hand that the United Nations has all the problems you would expect a 60-year-old institution to have. I also know that the institution remains far more important and useful than the politically motivated “UN-bashers” would have you believe.

While the world’s aspirations for the United Nations have often exceeded the organization’s grasp, it has, nevertheless, served us reasonably well, and sometimes, very well. A hundred years ago, the only protection against aggression was power. The only checks on would-be aggressors were the costs of fighting and the risks of failing. In the intervening decades, the UN gave birth to a body of international law that stigmatized aggression and created a strong norm against it. Although the Cold War saw international law breached by both sides, the norm against aggression was much more respected than not. In the interim, the legal force of the Charter has grown.

Since the end of the Cold War, according to the Human Security Report of 2005, the number of armed conflicts around the world has declined by more than 40% for which pro-active UN prevention efforts merit a large measure of credit. Through the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN

has assisted East and West avoid a nuclear Armageddon. The UN has helped the world to feed its hungry, shelter its dispossessed, minister to its sick and educate its children. More mundanely, the UN has regulated the world's air travel, coordinated its mail services, overseen its patents system, regulated its shipping and apportioned its electromagnetic spectrum, among many other unsung but necessary tasks.

There is no doubt in my mind that the world would have been a worse and much bloodier place in the last 50 years without the United Nations. Nevertheless, quite evidently, while the UN is not going to hell in a hand basket, all is not well, either. The organization is hamstrung by profound lack of consensus within the international community. Most fundamentally, there is, at best, imperfect agreement on the part of the members regarding the institution's purposes and priorities. For the great bulk of the membership, which both gained independence from colonial rulers and acceded to membership after the birth of the organization in 1945, the priorities of the UN are, or should be, economic and social development, not security. Where you stand on security depends famously on where you live. Consider what the world looks like from the perspective of the poor:

- Natural disasters killed nearly 240,000 people in 2004, the vast majority in poorer countries.
- Small arms and light weapons killed at least 300,000 people, predominantly in the poorer countries.
- Intra-state conflict caused the deaths of 100's of thousands more, notably in Africa.
- Pregnancy-related complications killed more than 500,000 women, 99% of them in the Third World.
- Malaria killed one million people in 2005, mostly in the poorest countries, and
- HIV-AIDS killed almost three million people in 2005, again overwhelmingly in the Third World

On the other hand, for most of the founding countries of the UN, the world body exists first and foremost as an instrument to safeguard international peace and security, and only secondarily to promote well-being. Even among those countries that see the UN primarily in collective security terms, there is disagreement whether the UN is the transcendent authority for governing international relations or just one body among several, a foreign policy instrument to be used pragmatically when doing so suits national purposes. The world has not yet fully assimilated former Secretary General

Kofi Annan's insight that there is no security without development, no development without security and no security or development without human rights protection, and that multilateral cooperation is essential to the achievement of all three.

These divisions between North and South and between North and North are part of the reason that the UN has been unable to fashion a consensus on some of the most pressing security issues of our times--terrorism, the Middle East, and, increasingly, nuclear weapons and arms control. What common ground there had been shrank with the Iraq war. Worse have been the conscience-shocking failures of the UN in Cambodia, the Congo, and the Balkans. In Rwanda, while 800,000 people were being systematically slaughtered, Security Council members, notably the United States, played legal word-games in order not to trigger their obligations under the Genocide Convention. Now it is the hundreds of thousands of innocents of Darfur who appeal to the languid collective conscience. The UN secretariat has forced the world to confront this unfolding tragedy but the reactions of member countries have been, literally, unconscionable.

The old Human Rights Commission had become a caricature of itself, with human rights abusers seeking membership so they could deflect attention from themselves, often to Israel. It has been replaced by a Human Rights Council, albeit with disappointing results so far.

The United Nations has had some management failures and scandals, too, although fewer and less serious than the Wall Street Journal and a handful of right wing American Senators and fevered neo-cons would have you believe. Sensationalist headlines notwithstanding, far less money went missing in the Oil-for-Food program than in Canada's sponsorship scandal. One UN official is accused of defrauding the program of \$140,000. Even that is unacceptable, of course, but the figures do help to place the scandal in perspective. Even Saddam Hussein's kick-back schemes and oil smuggling (outside the Oil-for-Food program, by definition), both well known to the Security Council membership, pale into insignificance compared to the disappearance of the \$9 billion that the UN turned over to the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority, who lost it.

The institution suffers from structural problems that make accountability difficult, even in some respects, impossible. Unlike national governments or private corporations, no one is in charge of the entire enterprise, literally, and thus, no one is accountable for it. According to Article 97 of the Charter, the Secretary General is, the Chief Administrative Officer, not the Chief Executive Officer, a designation that was made deliberately by the Charter's framers. The Secretary General is, thus, more Secretary than General. The Secretary General is accountable for the Secretariat's performance but not for the UN's failures to act, although the Secretariat is often identified by the public with those failures even where blame should reside

predominantly with the member countries who actually run the place, especially the five permanent members of the Security Council.

Overlooked in the recriminations stimulated largely by differences over the Iraq war and the Oil for Food Program, is the fact that the UN has substantially re-invented itself. Since the end of the Cold War, member countries have been much readier to authorize the use force to stop *internal* conflicts. From 1945 until 1989, there were 13 UN military operations. Since then, there have been 43 military interventions under UN auspices, and the UN's annual peacekeeping budget has grown to over \$5 billion. The UN has served as mid-wife in the births of more than 100 countries since 1945, the great majority of which came into being peacefully. It has also supervised scores of elections and otherwise helped many members make transitions to democracy; According to Freedom House, over two-thirds of UN member countries are now full or partial democracies. The passage of a half dozen core human rights treaties and their progressive assimilation into domestic laws has made it possible for an increasing share of the world's people to live in dignity and safety. An extensive international criminal justice system has developed under UN auspices, a major innovation foreseen nowhere in the original Charter. Now, the world's monsters can no longer sleep soundly in their beds, confident that they are immune to prosecution. It is instructive, and in a way, encouraging, that from the jungles of Uganda Joseph Kony, head of the murderous Lord's Resistance Army of child soldiers, has attempted to seek immunity from prosecution by the ICC, as have Sudanese officials.

It was to the UN that Lebanon turned for the investigation of the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri. The UN has given birth to concepts we now take for granted such as sustainable development. Scores of environmental treaties have been concluded under UN auspices, from protecting the ozone layer to climate change. Perhaps the most visible recent UN innovation has been the creation of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the office that organized the massive international relief response to the Asian Tsunami, and to numerous other humanitarian crises spawned by major natural disasters and complex emergencies.

The UN has launched a Peacebuilding initiative to help countries back from the abyss of failure and conflict. A standing police capability for the UN is being created, to complement UN military actions. And, at the 2005 summit, the UN meeting at head of state and government level, endorsed, "the Responsibility to Protect", the Canadian initiated idea launched in the aftermath of Srebrenica and Rwanda.

Thirteen counter-terrorism treaties have been concluded by the General Assembly, despite the UN's regrettable failure to agree to a definition of terrorism, and the UN Security Council has twice "legislated" the proscription of cooperation with terrorists by member countries. All told, over 500 multilateral treaties have been concluded under UN auspices.

The point is that from counter-terrorism treaties, to human rights conventions, to the support of democracy and promotion of the rule of law, to coordinating disaster relief, to fostering sustainable development, to rebuilding states emerging from conflict, to management reform, the UN has taken very significant strides into the 21st century. It is performing a role that is still valued by its members. Polling conducted for the BBC World Service in 2006 by GlobeScan and the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland indicates that while support for the United Nations on the part of the public around the world has flagged somewhat in recent years as the organization has struggled with intractable issues, with the sole exception of Iraq, the people in every country polled, including the United States, had more positive views of the UN than negative and, in many cases, much more positive views.

The most important major international issues continue to be brought to the UN for deliberation, e.g., the Israeli-Lebanese war and the Iranian nuclear program. That the UN does not resolve all issues to the satisfaction of all its members and their publics is not a reflection so much on the UN's incompetence, as it is on the intractability of some major issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, making consensus scarce.

All of this is not an invitation to complacency. The lack of consensus on these issues is a serious matter and ways have to be found to facilitate agreement. Former Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin had one such idea. He advocated creating a group of 20 major countries who would seek consensus among themselves on issues such as climate change and terrorism and import that consensus into the 192 member General Assembly for consideration. This idea is still worthy of promotion and if the Canadian government does not do so, others probably will.

The lesson to take away from this lengthy explication is that the UN is not the corrupt, incompetent, basket-case of an organization that its critics maintain. It is doing a far better job than its critics contend and even than its defenders know. But, it cannot simply command consensus among its members and like any 60 year old institution, it needs ongoing updating and innovation to cope with new problems.

Paragon Lost

If the UN needs innovation, current US foreign policy needs reinventing. After six years, the Bush administration's foreign policy record is distressing. Its failings are doubly painful because they stand in such stark contrast to the towering foreign policy achievements of previous administrations. If only as a kind of antidote to the current gloom, it is worth highlighting only the most obvious past US successes.

- American participation in World War I turned the tide against Germany
- US power in World War II was crucial to the defeat of the Axis countries.

- Far-sighted American diplomacy was integral to the creation of the United Nations and the development of the treaty-based system and international law, which help us govern our world.
- The Marshall Plan put Europe back on its feet and Germany and Japan on the road to democratic governance.
- The American-led containment of the Soviet Union and the defeat of communism were the signal security achievements of the second half of the 20th century.
- North-east Asia, perhaps the most dangerous region on the planet, might long since have exploded had it not been for American military power and diplomatic acuity and agility.

The Bush Administration's decision to invade Iraq stands in stark contrast to this list of successes. It is arguably the worst foreign policy mistake in American history. The speed with which the bottom has fallen out of support for the United States around the world as a consequence of the invasion has been breathtaking. In a BBC poll completed in January this year of 26,000 people in 25 countries, 73% disapproved of how the US government has dealt with Iraq, and over 50% believed that the US had mainly negative influence in the world, exceeded only by Iran and Israel. Only 57% of the Americans interviewed said they thought that the US was having a positive influence.

What a difference a war makes. On September 12, 2001, the UN General Assembly unanimously expressed its sympathy and solidarity with the United States, and on the same day, *Le Monde* proclaimed, "We are all Americans." In official Washington's view, and in the view of many Americans, 9/11 had changed everything—and justified anything, including preventive, not just pre-emptive war.

The difference between preventive and pre-emptive war is not just legalistic hair splitting. Pre-emption imposes much more rigorous tests than prevention does regarding the capability and intent of an adversary to do harm, the urgency of the need for self-defence and the absence of effective alternatives to immediate military action. The UN Charter prohibits preventive war, for the very good reason that it would lead us all back to the law of the jungle.

If Americans thought 9/11 changed everything, most of the rest of the world thought it was the attack on Iraq, in defiance of the United Nations, that changed everything. It was an illegal war in the eyes of most UN members. The war in Iraq was preventive, not pre-emptive, to change a regime that possibly harboured malevolent intentions towards the US and its allies and friends in the region, and that potentially had the capabilities to act on such intentions.

In defying the international community and neglecting to show "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind", to paraphrase the Declaration of Independence, the US dug

itself into a hole that will probably take it generations to climb back out of. Worse, the US conflated Afghanistan, Iraq and the various Arab-Israeli conflicts into its “War on Terror” and made strong, uncritical support for Israel’s approach to the Palestinians the default position of American Middle East policy. In the process, the US has fed a growing resentment, even animosity, towards it throughout the Muslim world, and well beyond. Many Muslims see the War on Terror increasingly morphing into a war on Islam, potentially the most serious issue your generation will face.

In its conduct of “The War on Terror”, the United States has lost a lot more than a reputation for effectiveness. The principal casualty has been its standing as a paragon of the rule of law and human rights. The list of failings is long:

- The invasion of Iraq in contravention of the UN Charter and despite the opposition of the great majority of member countries, resulting in the deaths of scores of thousands of Iraqis
- The self-serving interpretations of the Convention Against Torture
- The disregard of the Geneva conventions
- The scandalous treatment of prisoners in Abu Ghraib, Baghram and Guantanamo
- The “extraordinary renditions” of suspects to countries known to torture prisoners, including Canadian citizen Maher Arar.
- The suspension of Habeas Corpus
- The many violations of US domestic law, even possibly the US Constitution

At the same time, it is also fair to note that Iraq was not the first significant US foreign policy error. In 1953, the US and UK covertly overthrew the democratically-elected Mossadegh government in Iran when it nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (BP, today), creating an historical grievance that Teheran is still nursing and for which the US and the rest of us are still paying. In the ‘60’s, the US helped overthrow Patrice Lumumba, the Congo’s democratically elected leader, and supported countless African strongmen, thus derailing the continent’s prospects. In the ‘60’s and 70’s, the war in Vietnam indelibly stained attitudes around the world towards the United States. In 1973, U.S. support for the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Chile opened a wound in Latin America that is still not healed. In the 1980s, the U.S. cooperated with the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, including Osama bin Laden, and with Saddam Hussein, policies that came quickly back to haunt American policy-makers. In amnesia-prone North America, especially but not exclusively in the

US, people have “moved on” with scarcely a backward glance. In the countries concerned, however, outside interventions are enduring parts of the national narratives, and not positive parts.

Throughout most of the post-war era, most industrialized countries, with France a notable exception, have been content to see Washington lead the world. This is in part because of the US’s determination to lead and its sheer capacity to do so, in part, because of confidence, now shaken, in American goals. And, in part because others, Canada included, either have seen no international threat to themselves or, less noble, have felt insufficient obligation to help others to make the requisite investments in military capability. In any case, as a consequence of the leadership role that the US has voluntarily assumed and that most others have readily conceded or even welcomed, and because of the considerable costs and risks of such leadership, both sides of the political aisle in Washington have come increasingly to regard the US as bearing a disproportionate burden and, partly as a consequence, meriting exceptional dispensations from international law and norms of behaviour.

This sense of entitlement to exceptional treatment is a contemporary twist on a powerful myth in the collective American psyche. The idea of exceptionalism likely dates from the Puritan migration in the 17th century, perhaps first recorded in John Winthrop’s sermon on the “Shining City on the Hill”. Alexis De Tocqueville remarked on the phenomenon in the 19th Century and Margaret MacMillan in her book “Paris, 1919” discerned it in the American delegation to the Paris peace talks, as well. US “exceptionalism” was given modern currency in the 1980’s when President Ronald Reagan evoked Winthrop and his “shining city”, a metaphor that evidently continues to hold a strong appeal for many Americans. The Clinton administration gave the idea a more secular cast when Secretary of State Madeleine Albright characterized the US as the one indispensable country. President George W. Bush imbued the idea with a missionary tone when he said that “the advance of freedom is the calling of our time; it is the calling of our country.”

Down through the history of the US republic, religion has been prominent in American self-definition, not least the belief that Americans had a mission to transform the world. President Lincoln spoke of “an almost chosen people”. President Franklin Roosevelt spoke of America’s “divine heritage”. President Reagan saw the Soviet Union as the Evil Empire. President George W. Bush upped the ante, portraying Iraq, Iran and North Korea as the “axis of Evil”. President Bush characterized Saddam Hussein as the “evil Doer”, leaving little doubt who he thought was the “Good Doer”. The journalist Bob Woodward reported in his book “Plan of Attack” that President Bush told him that in seeking guidance on Iraq, “there [wa]s a higher father that [he] appeal[ed] to.”

The gap between the perception others have of the US and the self-perception of Americans has grown perilously wide. At the 2004 Democratic convention, Senator Kerry said: "The USA never goes to war because it wants to. We only go to war because we have to." President Bush not long before that had told a Memorial Day audience that: "it is not in our nature to seek out wars and conflicts. We only get involved when adversaries have left us no alternative." This self-perception is true with respect to World Wars I and II and 9/11. But, overall, to put it most charitably, neither history nor current practice testifies to these self-perceptions. Consider: The Mexican Wars, Nicaragua (several times), The Spanish American War, Puerto Rico, Cuba (several times), Panama (several times), Haiti (several times), The Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Grenada, the Philippines, China, Viet Nam and Cambodia. Iraq, too, was a war of choice.

The growth of exceptionalism, delusion and religious conviction have been paralleled by the militarization of foreign policy. Washington has persuaded itself that US security can best, in fact, only be assured by American military power. Neither treaties nor international law nor institutions, including the United Nations and NATO, are deemed either capable of protecting US interests or necessary to confer legitimacy on US action. War is no longer seen as a last resort but is rather a ready instrument of American foreign policy.

"When your favourite tool is a hammer", according to Anonymous, "every problem looks like a nail".

There have been more major US military operations abroad in the last 15 years than there had been in the previous 45, according to Robert Bacevich of Boston University, a former military officer. After the Cold war, unlike the aftermath of the Second World War, the US did not cut back on military spending. In fact, the Pentagon's long range plans call for a budget more than 20% higher than the Cold War average, which will likely preserve the US's position of outspending the rest of the world combined on the military. This spending level is in the absence of any obvious challenger. The National Security Strategy of 2002, which promises to preserve US dominance in perpetuity, is a prescription for vast budgets into the indefinite future. If implemented as written, it could, also, mean, preventive wars without end.

The US military's reputation has recovered from the Vietnam era to the point that it is now believed by Americans to embody the best qualities of the American people, an institution that every American political office holder feels the need to salute, literally and figuratively.

Meanwhile others see the UN as a flawed but nonetheless central feature of the international governance system, the place where countries come together to work out problems cooperatively, if they can. The US sees the UN in *a la carte terms*, to be used

when advantageous to do so. In the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, President Bush and Vice-President Cheney led a concerted effort to deprecate the UN and the UN Charter and to cast doubt on their continuing relevance. On the eve of the war, the Vice-President apparently threatened to discredit Hans Blix, the chief UN weapons inspector. In the wake of the war, US Congressmen sought to destroy the reputation of the UN Secretary General, probably for not having supported the war and for calling it illegal. For many in the Bush administration and some in Congress, US policy and necessity simply trump international law, notably the UN Charter.

The US's more self-serving expressions of exceptionalism, together with the corrupting influences of disproportionate power, have led to an American questioning of the applicability of international law and norms to America at all. In one very clear example, the US sought to exempt itself from all jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. It was an unvarnished, bear-knuckled and unapologetic effort to codify one law for the goose and another for the gander.

It was not always thus. At the end of the Second World War, the US bestrode the world even more colossally than it does today. In 1945, the US share of the world economy was about 40%; today, it's about 32% (22% at purchasing power parity). In 1945, US defence spending totaled, in constant 2005 dollars, approximately \$900 billion; today the equivalent figure is about \$600 billion. President Truman, nevertheless, observed for Americans' benefit before the assembled UN delegates in San Francisco in 1945 that

“[w]e all have to recognize that no matter how great our strength, we must deny ourselves the license to do always as we please”.

In 1961, President Kennedy said that,

We must face the fact that the United States is neither omnipotent nor omniscient—that we are only six percent of the world's population—that we cannot impose our will upon the other ninety-four percent of mankind—that we cannot right every wrong or reverse each adversity—and that therefore there cannot be an American solution to every world problem.

In 1990, the George H.W. Bush administration took the case against Iraq for its illegal invasion of Kuwait to the UN Security Council, complying with the letter and spirit of the Charter. The current Bush Administration, headed by a man of little international experience, propelled by the deluded ambitions of the Neo-Cons, and determined to restore the power that the White House had lost to Congress in the wake of Vietnam and Watergate, parted company with its predecessors. The distance between delusion and hubris is short and the Bush Administration covered it in a sprint. This administration has an air of Greek tragedy about it, a subject worthy of Shakespeare. This problem is, belatedly, being corrected by the American people, the ultimate check

on any administration's policies and stabilizer of US behaviour. US policy has begun to adapt in response to the Democratic sweep of the 2006 mid-term elections.

Still, the enhanced standing of the US military and the scale of its resources, the presumption of America's exceptional standing above international law, the influence of fundamentalist religious impulses and a capacity for historical amnesia, have all imbued American foreign policy with a certitude that leaves little room for the dissent of its allies. And that makes the US a difficult multilateral partner, whatever Canadian party is in power. And strong as the Democratic opposition to the war on Iraq has belatedly become, there is much less distance between the Democrats and the Republicans on the idea of attacking Iran, even on the potentiality of the use of force. All of the lessons of the past six years do not appear to have been assimilated yet.

Between Delusion and Inertia: Canadian Foreign Policy

If the UN is indispensable but deeply divided and the US is the most powerful country on earth but pursuing a flawed foreign policy, what does that mean for Canada? Some, the "Realists", would support our super-power right or wrong. Others, the "Romantics" would throw in our lot with multilateralism. Both would be wrong.

As Allan Gotlieb has observed, our effectiveness in the world, including New York, depends in part on our influence in Washington. And our influence in Washington depends on our effectiveness in the world. In either case we need a competent, independent foreign policy.

Foreign policy has so rarely figured prominently in the discourse of Canadian leaders that Canadians can be excused for only vaguely knowing what it is at any given time. Prime Minister Pearson said that foreign policy was the speeches he gave and the letters he signed, and that he would know at the end of the year what our foreign policy had been. Prime Minister Trudeau said that foreign policy was the extension abroad of national policy. My favourite definition is Mr. Mulroney's, which is that foreign policy is the ability to say "nice doggie" while reaching for a rock.

In today's world, foreign policy comprises the goals governments decide to pursue in a chaotic world and the means, diplomatic, military and financial, for achieving them. It provides a frame-work for coping with the events that Tony Blair and Harold MacMillan warned of. Foreign policy is integral to contemporary global governance as states attempt to relate to other states and to non-state entities in order to enhance the well-being of their people, and to provide them security in a world that has the means to destroy them or impoverish them or both.

An effective foreign policy begins with an informed and interested population.

My parents' generation was both informed and interested—they could hardly afford to be otherwise after the devastation of World War II. And they were rewarded with “the Golden Age” of Canadian diplomacy, when Canada both had weight and punched above its weight class. In intervening years, partly because Canada turned inwards, partly because the threat to Canada receded, partly because we became rich, partly because we were content to let the Americans take care of things, Canadians tuned out.

Last year, in the run up to our federal election, there were four debates among the candidates for Prime Minister. Not a single question was asked about foreign affairs. And yet Prime Ministers typically find themselves spending more time on foreign affairs than on any other subject: Mr. Chrétien made the crucial decision not to send troops to Iraq. Mr. Martin made the fateful decision to send troops into combat in Kandahar. Mr. Harper extended the troops in Kandahar and, five months into his mandate, was confronted with an unexpected war in the Middle East, with Canadian citizens caught on both sides. All Prime Ministers made decisions that had a direct bearing on Canadians' security. Mr. Chrétien and Mr. Martin had both published foreign policy reviews that gave some inkling of their views, as had Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Trudeau before them. Mr. Harper has not published such a document, understandably enough for a Prime Minister with a minority government. Still, it's a precarious world and Canadians need to know more about what their leader thinks than they do now. Considering that foreign policy is not just a “nice-to-do”; not just a sideline, not just an after-thought, and not easily learned on the job, but actually integral to it, is it unreasonable to think that international experience should be a prerequisite for the job of the Prime Minister?

In any case, an effective foreign policy requires a cognizance of our interests and values, combined with the will to act, or not, when appropriate. It requires a clear-eyed understanding of who we are and it helps to know, also, who we are perceived to be. How *do* others see us? Having lived abroad and represented Canada much of my adult life, I have had the benefit of seeing ourselves as others see us, to paraphrase Robbie Burns. Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson once famously called us “the stern daughter of the mother of God”. Most Americans these days, when they look northward at all, which is rare, see us mostly benignly, if obscurely. To many of the sons and daughters of the American Revolution, Canadians are artifacts of an earlier time, an American-like people inexplicably and a little obtusely somehow still tied to the English crown. To most Americans, we are somewhat distant cousins, a polite, self-effacing version of their more assertive, adversarial, selves. By the way, how do the inventors of baseball and four-down football get away with portraying the inventors of ice hockey and basketball as boring?!

As depicted in the American media, especially cable TV news, Canadians are too liberal, too welcoming of the world's huddled masses, insufficiently concerned about the world's clear and present dangers, keepers of a porous border, even harbourers of

terrorists, but still a welcome supplier of energy and of pharmaceutical drugs as well as of other less legal substances. In Washington, Canadians are assumed to share American values and presumed to hold the same world-view, albeit given to occasional, puzzling manifestations of independence of mind, generally regarded as in error.

Canadian agreement with American foreign policy is usually simply taken for granted, the supposed quid for the American quo of protecting us from whoever they currently believe their enemy is. Intergovernmental disagreements and bilateral disputes are assumed to be the consequence of a regrettable Canadian combination of inferior information, moral unclarity, faulty analysis and dubious motives. More seriously, polls indicate that esteem for Canada diminished during the early days of the Iraq war, and has not yet recovered. And successive administrations have sought greater Canadian military effort, which our efforts in Afghanistan are presumably remedying, at least to the extent they are known. But generally, the Canadian Embassy Washington is still located at the corner of Interdependence Avenue and Indifference Street, with little more access to the closed circuit of American foreign policy making than a lot of other foreigners.

To the wider world, which sees Canada from a more distant perspective and in even less detail, Canadians are the other Americans, the fortunate citizens of one of the more prosperous countries on earth. The world really does respect us for our successful, prosperous, bilingual, multi-ethnic, law-abiding, cultivated and compassionate society. The world knows that we value diversity and integrate foreigners into national life and purpose not perfectly but as well or better than any one else. We are seen as a country that tries, and, mostly, succeeds to respect human rights and to protect minorities, a country worthy of emulation, albeit one that ought to do better by its aboriginal population. We are recognized for a culture that generates remarkable excellence in literature, the arts and science. We are also known for an economy that delivers an enviable quality of life and a very high standard of living. Our economy ranks about 8th in the world, we are one of the world's major trading countries, our resource base is enviable and envied, our modest population is larger than that of over 150 other countries, and even our military capacity is not trivial, relative to most.

That makes it all the more disappointing that as a nation, we have been in retreat from international responsibility for a generation. On military deployments abroad, Canada has fallen dramatically far down the list of contributors to UN missions, below countries with a small fraction of our population and wealth. Even counting our contribution to Afghanistan, where we field 2500 of the best troops on earth, we do not crack the top 10 in international military contributions to peace and security. On development assistance, we rank closer to the bottom of donor generosity than to the top. On the environment, we relinquished pretensions to international leadership a decade ago. On diplomacy, we are closing posts to save trivial amounts of money. At the same time as the government is adding \$17 billion to our defence spending, to

procure (mostly) much needed modern equipment, it is actually cutting the funding for diplomacy, where the marginal return on expenditures is much higher. With these kind of funding disparities, an increasingly military cast to Canadian foreign policy seems likely.

It does not have to be that way. Canada's wallet is not the problem. As the Prime Minister Harper's budget this week made very clear, we have never been richer in our history or better able to afford an effective, responsible, independent foreign policy. To govern is to choose. There is no reason why we cannot choose to be more effective militarily, as well as to augment, and revamp, our foreign aid program and give ourselves the diplomatic capacity to speak up and, more important, to stand up for what we believe in. Few countries can match us at foreign policy innovation, perhaps because we think about policy more than we actually implement it. Ideas R Us, Implementation has too often been someone else, notably with respect to the Responsibility to Protect and its application to Darfur. We have it in our power to do better.

Permit me one digression on Iraq. There are still Canadians, both academics and some in business community or at least its associations, who think Mr. Chrétien's decision to decline to participate in the US invasion of Iraq was an error. These people can contemplate the catastrophe of a war that has roiled the Middle East, triggered the deaths of scores, perhaps hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, created millions of refugees and cost 3,000 plus Americans their lives and wounded another 30,000, many hideously, and still wish the Canadian flag were flying alongside the Stars and Stripes in Baghdad. They seem to see Iraq as part of the War on Terror, and believe it naïve to think that such a war could end in anything less than a clash of civilizations. Such fatalism can, in fact, be fatal. My advice to the next generation is to discount the fevers of people who see a War with Islam, or any other war, as inevitable and that Canada's place is simply to salute its acquiescence. An independent perspective on the world is always possible, and necessary.

A word of caution about Anti-Americanism. There are differences between Canadians and Americans, starting with the fact that Americans know they are part of the most powerful country in history, and we know we are not. Disagreements are inevitable, if relatively few in number, in our integrated and interdependent economies. Differing with the Americans for the sake of being different, however, is as unworthy of Canada as going along to get along is. Chances are that much of the time our interests and values, if not our ambitions, will coincide with theirs. But when they do not coincide, we need to have the character to make our own decisions according to our own lights. To some "realists", disagreement with the US is anti-Americanism virtually by definition. There are, undoubtedly, some Canadians who are anti-American. But the term is much too readily brandished in Canada; polling by the Pew organization indicates that Canadians remain one of the most pro-American of nations, especially as regards the American people.

The fact is criticism of US foreign policy is usually heard first, longest and loudest in the United States, written on pages of the most prestigious US newspapers and proclaimed in Congress itself. Yet, Canadians who criticize the same policies in the same terms are dismissed as anti-American. This phenomenon is akin to treating criticism of Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza as anti-Israeli and even anti-Semitic, even when the same criticisms can be read routinely in the pages of Haaretz. Voicing disagreement, respectfully preferably, with some aspect or other of US foreign policy is no more anti-American than voicing disapproval of US policy on softwood lumber imports or drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. At the same time, our right to disagree with Washington reflects as well on American perspicacity and principle as on Canadian independence of mind and pluck.

As Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations, I was invariably given a willing hearing, whether the issue was Iraq, helping the birth of the nascent International Criminal Court or proposing innovations in the way the UN does business. In the BBC poll that I referred to earlier, Canada topped the list of the countries having a mainly positive influence in the world. Of course, that result was immediately disputed by the Canadian media. The point is that we have more capacity than we sometimes give ourselves credit for, and more need than ever to avail ourselves of it.

To be effective abroad, we need to be influential in Washington. To be influential in Washington, we need to be effective in the world. Between this yin and yang of international relations, there will always be ample room for Canadians of vision, principle and purpose.

Thank You.