Canada at the United Nations 1945 - 1989:
Pervasive Themes and Evolving Trends©

By Elizabeth Riddell-Dixon

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INTRODUCTION

This paper constitutes the first part of a larger project that examines how Canada's macro-level objectives, specific goals, and strategies for achieving these objectives and goals have evolved throughout the UN's history. What have been the pervasive themes? To what extent have Canada's macro-level objectives and specific goals changed? Why? To what extent are Canada's positions at the UN today reflective of new trends and to what extent are they continuations of past policies?   These are some of the questions to be explored in the larger project.

This paper examines Canada's macro-level objectives, specific goals and strategies during the founding of the UN and the Cold War years. It begins in the early 1940s when plans for the UN were first being discussed and ends in the late 1980s as the Cold War era was drawing to a close.[1] Space does not permit a comprehensive treatment of all that happened during this period; instead key events and developments are highlighted as is Canada's role in them. From this discussion, several themes are evident.   Canadian foreign policy has been largely reactive, motivated primarily by self-interest, and firmly committed to the success of the UN. Cold War politics profoundly affected events and developments. Canadian foreign policy has recognized the predominant influence of the great powers, the need to accommodate them and, in particular, the need to mitigate US unilateralism.   The Canadian government was never a monolithic, unitary actor; however, the number and the diversity of the participants in the policy-making process increased over time. Changes in political leadership did not result in major shifts in the direction of Canadian foreign policy at the UN, although they affected the importance accorded to the UN and Canada's choice of priorities.   Domestic public opinion played a role - albeit a fairly minor role - in parameter setting and agenda setting, but it exercised little influence over specific policies.   Debates about the meaning of the term 'middle power', whether the term applies to Canada, how much influence Canada has wielded at the

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[1] 1989 saw the fall of the Berlin War and the Soviet Union clearly in demise - events heralding the end of the Cold War.

UN, and to what extent its influence has waxed and waned over the years are beyond the scope of this paper.

CREATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Canada, along with most other countries in the world, was excluded from the initial negotiations to establish the UN. In 1941, before the US even entered the Second World War, US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill talked of establishing a post-war international organization. In the autumn of 1944, the major allied powers of the Second World War - the United Kingdom, USSR, USA and China - met at Dunbarton Oaks, near Washington, D.C., to develop a blueprint - a draft Charter - for the United Nations. After agreeing on the essential principles, objectives and structure of the proposed organization among themselves, these major allied powers presented their draft proposals to their other wartime allies and a few neutral states at the United Nations Conference on the International Organization.[2] Canada along with forty-nine other states attended the conference, which was held in San Francisco in April 1945 - several weeks prior to the end of the Second World War.

Although Canada had not been privy to the major powers' negotiations leading up to the San Francisco conference, it had been kept well informed of these development, by British officials.[3] Thus Canada had been actively planning for the new organization for over a year prior to the San Francisco conference.[4] Canada's macro-level objectives were to ensure that

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[2] All countries that had declared war on at least one of the Axis powers were invited to the conference. In addition, invitations were extended to Argentina, Byelorussia, Denmark and the Ukraine.

[3]   Hector Mackenzie, "Canada and the United Nations, Then and Now," in Fabrizio Ghilardi, ed., *Nuove Prospettive per la Sicurezza Mondiale?* [A New Approach to World Security] (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 1998), p. 64.

[4] Tom Keating, *Canada and World Order: the Multilateralist Tradition in Canadian Foreign Policy*. 2nd Ed. (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 27.

the UN was brought into being and that it was a strong and viable organization. As a result of its experience in the League of Nations and during the Second World War, Canada recognized that the viability of the UN depended on securing the participation of all the major powers. Yet it also sought to ensure that smaller countries, especially middle powers like itself, had a significant voice in the new organization.   The question was: how many privileges should be conceded to the major powers in order to ensure their membership in the UN?   The Dunbarton Oaks Proposals specified that the UN was to be "based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving states".[5] In spite of these noble sentiments, it was clear from the Dunbarton Oaks Proposals that the drafting powers expected to retain firm control of the new organization.   In keeping with the interests and priorities of the major powers, the new organization's primary objective was the maintenance of international peace and security. In this realm, the provisions for great power dominance were most pronounced.   Each of the great powers[6] was to have permanent seat on the Security Council - the executive organ for ensuring international peace and security.   Most controversial of all was the major powers' proposal to give themselves the individual right to veto substantial decisions pertaining to peace and security as well as decisions to amend the *Charter*, to admit new members, and to select the Secretary General.

The need to strike a balance between accommodating the demands of the great powers in order to secure their participation, on one hand, and seeking to maximize one's own opportunities to exert influence in the new organization, on the other, were not unique to Canada. It was a challenge faced by all the non-great powers. Yet they responded differently.

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[5]   United States, Department of State, *Dunbarton Oaks Proposals for the Establishment of a General International Organization* (2257) (Washington, 1945), Chapter II, Article 1, p. 5.

[6] The US, UK, USSR, China, and France were given permanent seats. From 1950 to 1971, Taiwan held the Chinese seat and the US ensured that the Peoples Republic of China was not allowed membership in the UN. In 1971, the undesirability of excluding one of the world's most powerful states was obvious to all and the China seat was given to the Peoples Republic of China and Taiwan was expelled.

Australia strongly championed the rights of the smaller countries, while Canada adopted a more

low key approach.[7]   The desire to placate the major powers and to ensure their commitment to

the UN, at times

> prompted Canadian delegates to temper their rhetoric and to qualify their support for more vocal efforts by others - notably Australia's quixotic foreign minister, Herbert Evatt - to constrain the great powers or to advance the interests of the smaller nations.[8]

Nonetheless, Canada joined the Australian-led opposition to permanent membership and

vetoes for the major powers. Their campaign was in vain as the major powers refused to

relinquish their privileges. Australia's leadership did, however, earned it the respect of the

smaller powers and, as a result, it was elected to the first Security Council. In contrast, Canada,

which had very much wanted a seat on the Security Council, failed to get elected.[9]

Canada and the other middle powers did have some success in expanding the UN's

mandate in the areas of economic and social issues and in strengthening the bodies designed

to deal with such issues. Economic and social issues were given a greater prominence than

they had been accorded by the great powers. The promotion of human rights and fundamental

freedoms was added to the new organization's key objectives. The General Assembly was

authorized to discuss any issue within UN jurisdiction and all matters pertaining to UN organs.

The Economic and Social Council was elevated from being a subsidiary of the General

Assembly, under the Dunbarton Oaks Proposals, to being a major UN organ with the power to

convene conferences and draft conventions on topics within its competence.   Provisions were

included to expand the Secretariat and to safeguard the independence of its personnel. A new

court, the International Court of Justice, was established as a major UN organ and its Statute

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[7] Keating, *Canada and World Order*, p. 24.

[8] Hector Mackenzie, "Canada and the United Nations, Then and Now", p. 68.

[9] In 1948, Canada began a two-year term on the Security Council. Since then it has been elected to the Security Council about every 10 years.

was appended to the *Charter*, which meant that states automatically become members of the court when they join the UN.

The Canadian delegation fought hard and successfully to have the functionalist principle included as a criterion for determining membership in UN organs. According to Canadian functionalism, representation in an organ's decision-making should be based on a state's willingness and capability to make a contribution to the particular issue area under the body's mandate. Canada did not accept the division of the world into two categories: the great powers and the rest. Instead, it pointed to the degrees of power and demanded that the contributions of middle powers be reflected in decision-making structures.

> The Canadian theory of functionalism was more than an argument for a larger Canadian role. It was a philosophy for world self-government. It accepted a special role for the great powers in matters of security, and therefore the veto, not simply because of political necessity but because security was the appropriate function of the great powers. But security wasn't everything, and those who had major military responsibilities could not claim on that basis to dominate other international matters. The hierarchy of economic powers was different. The four major military powers - although not necessarily at that moment - happened also to be the four major economic powers and they might have special places in economic bodies but on the grounds of their economic qualifications.[10]

Canada used functionalist arguments in its efforts to enhance its influence in the UN and to ensure that it had a say in the use of Canadian resources.[11]   In so doing, it was seeking special privileges that were not entirely compatible with the legal concept on which the UN was based: the sovereign equality of states.

In a sense, "functionalism" was a Canadian attempt to exaggerate the significance of a small nation in a fashion that contradicted the liberal, democratic, and universalist notions on which a true world government would have to be based.[12]

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[10]   John Holmes, *The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order 1943-1957* (Vol.1). (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 236.

[11] Keating, *Canada and World Order*, p. 30.

[12] John English, *Shadow of Heaven: The Life of Lester Pearson: 1897-1948* (Vol. 1). (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1989), p. 284.

On the other hand, Canada's claims to functional representation posed a very minor threat to state sovereignty compared with the enormous privileges that the great powers claimed for themselves.

In San Francisco, Article 23 of the *Charter* was re-worked to specify that the 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council were to be elected with "due regard being specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution." John Holmes described securing this wording as a "hollow victory" because in practice the General Assembly has always accorded importance to geographic representation in electing non-permanent members of the Security Council, while generally ignoring functionalist principles.[13]

Amendments to Article 44 helped allay Canadian fears that the collective security provisions in the *Charter* could require states not represented on the Security Council to provide troops and equipment to a UN mission without having a say in how such resources were to be used. The amendments adopted at San Francisco required the UN Security Council to invite non-members which would be supplying armed forces for a collective security operation to discuss the deployment of such resources. The provisions proved to be of limited use as deadlock prevented the Security Council from ever authorizing a full scale collective security operation under Article 43. As Tom Keating points out, it is significant that Canada remained firmly committed to the UN in spite of not achieving the degree of influence that it had sought using functionalist arguments.[14]

All the states that had participated at the San Francisco conference signed the UN *Charter* on June 26, 1945. Four months later, on October 24, 1945, the *Charter* came into force after receiving the required number of ratifications.

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[13] Holmes, *The Shaping of Peace*, p. 251.

[14] Keating, *Canada and World Order*, p. 28.

THE COLD WAR

  Although the UN was born out of the ashes of the Second World War, it soon had to face a new reality: the Cold War which rose to prominence in the late 1940s and continued until the late 1980s. The US and its "Western" bloc allies and the Soviet Union and its "Eastern" bloc allies competed for geopolitical, military and ideological dominance. As the great powers became increasingly bitterly divided, they used their vetoes to block the aspirations of the rival bloc. Within the United Nations, Cold War rivalries were most apparent in the Security Council, whose executive role had been premised on the idea of great power cooperation.[15] The permanent members used their vetos to prevent the Council taking action perceived to be advantageous to the other bloc and detrimental to their own. Hence, the Security Council was frequently stalemated and it was not the dynamic guarantor of world peace that the founders had envisioned.

  Throughout this period, Canada had three main objectives at the UN pertaining to issue of peace and security. The first, and most important, was to maintain alliance solidarity. Canada was closely allied with the US and an active member of the Western alliance. Thus, it was important to Canada that its allies maintained a strong, united front. Secondly, Canada was eager to avoid a confrontation between the superpowers that would have had dire consequences for the country located between the USSR and the US.   Thirdly, Canada was a strong supporter of the UN; hence it sought to ensure that East-West rivalries and proxy wars did not undermine or even destroy the organization. East-West rivalries were strongly reflected in virtually all the major threats to peace and security that arose during the 40 year Cold War. While it is not possible to cover all the UN's responses to threats to and breeches of the peace,

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[15] According to Escott Reid, the cooperative relations that had existed earlier in the war between the major allies (the US, UK and Soviet Union) were already breaking down by the time of the San Francisco conference. "Hopes that Vanished at San Francisco" in Clyde Sanger (Ed.), *Canadians and the United Nations* (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1988), p. 7.

several key ones are profiled as examples of the pervasiveness of Cold War politics and of

Canada's attempts to realize the objectives outlined above.

North Korea's invasion of South Korea in June 1950 provided the UN with its first test of

voluntary collective security. With the Soviet Union boycotting Security Council meetings in

protest of the US' refusal to admit the People's Republic of China to UN membership, the US

quickly secured Security Council resolutions, first condemning the violence and then authorizing

the establishment of a voluntary international force under American command. The crisis both

reflected and heighten Cold War tensions. When the Soviet Union returned to the Security

Council in August, it used its veto prevent further action. The General Assembly assumed

responsibility for continuing the operation under the *Uniting for Peace Resolution*, much to the

consternation of the USSR.

As a staunch ally of the US, Canada supported the collective action in Korea. It was

further motivated by a concern for UN credibility and viability.   As Denis Stairs points out,

> For the Canadians most directly involved, the politics of the Korean War consisted
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> largely in the attempt to make the collective, or United Nations, aspect the dominant
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> one.[16]

Canada sought - with only modest success - to ensure that the operation remained under UN

control.[17]   It encouraged the US to work within the UN and not to exceed the UN's mandate for

the operation - messages that were not always appreciated in Washington.[18] The multilateral

dimensions of the operation were critical to the viability of the UN. Actions that had left the

USSR no option but to leave the organization would have seriously undermined the UN and

greatly exacerbated East-West tensions.

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[16] Denis Stairs, *The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War and the United States* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1974), p. 47.

[17]   The force was authorized by the Security Council but UN control was nominal as the US provided the leadership and most of the resources.

[18] Stairs, *The Diplomacy of Constraint*, p. 47.

In 1956, the UN faced another serious crisis when Israel, the UK and France attacked Egypt in retaliation for the latter's nationalization of the Suez Canal. The Suez Crisis posed a serious threat that had to be resolved. Of greatest concern to Canada were the strained relations among its principal allies.[19] The crisis deeply divided the Western alliance as the US vehemently opposed French and British decisions to attack Egypt. Tensions mounted to the point that, for a period of several weeks, communications ceased between Washington and its principal European allies.[20] In addition, having the US' allies (Israel, France and the UK) at war with the Soviet Union's ally (Egypt) had the potential to bring the superpowers into direct conflict, thereby igniting World War III. The crisis also had serious ramifications for the UN whose credibility would have been severely undermined by its failure to stop a clear case of armed aggression.

France and the UK used their vetoes to prevent the Security Council from taking action, so the issue was referred to the General Assembly under the *Uniting for Peace Resolution*. The General Assembly quickly passed a resolution calling for a cease-fire, the withdrawal of forces, and the re-opening of the Suez Canal. France and Britain refused to withdraw without UN guarantees that the cease-fire would be observed and the canal re-opened. Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, Lester Pearson proposed the establishment of an United Nations Emergency Force to keep the belligerents apart, and to monitor the cease-fire. His proposal was accepted and the concept of peacekeeping was born. Pearson's initiative achieved several important foreign policy objectives. The United Nations Emergency Force allowed France and Britain to withdraw their troops without losing face and defused the source of tension among Canada's principal allies. It enabled the UN to take strong and effective action in response to a crisis, thereby enhancing its credibility.

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[19] Kim Richard Nossal, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*. 3rd Ed. (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall Canada, 1997), p. 149.

[20] J. L. Granatstein, "Canada And Peacekeeping: Image And Reality" in J. L. Granatstein (Ed.) *Canadian Foreign Policy: Historical Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1986), 234.

Pearson's initiative won him the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize and earned international recognition for Canada . At home, public enthusiasm for peacekeeping soared.

Canada had been involved in sending peacekeepers to Palestine after 1948, to the India-Pakistan borders, and to Indochina in 1954, but there had been no public or official enthusiasm for these chores. After Suez, however, the enthusiasm was very strong, even among the Tory press and public that had felt qualms at Ottawa's reaction to the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt.[21] Pearson's leadership created a high standard by which future Canadian diplomats and politicians could be judged.

With the establishment of the UN Emergency Force in response to the Suez Crisis, peacekeeping - a concept not found in the *Charter* - became the UN's primary tool for conflict management. When civil war broke out in the Congo in 1960, the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of a peacekeeping mission. Involvement in the Congo posed severe financial and political problems for the UN. In order to achieve its expanding mandates, the UN force abandoned the neutrality of traditional peacekeeping missions and became embroiled in the fighting. As a result, the mission was the largest, most costly, and most dangerous of the Cold War. The consensus among the great powers soon disintegrated as the USSR and US began supporting rival factions. The USSR accused the US and its allies of using the UN mission to advance the position of anti-Soviet forces; hence the USSR refused to support further Security Council action. The Western block shifted responsibility for the operation from the stalemated Security Council to the General Assembly - a move that caused the USSR to refuse to contribute financially to the mission. France, Belgium and several African states were also highly critical of the operation and refused to pay their assessed financial contributions.

The Canada government was initially reluctant to send troops to a Black African country undergoing decolonization and experiencing a civil war, but concern for the future of the UN caused Canada to change in position.[22]

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[21] Granatstein, "Canada And Peacekeeping", p. 234.

[22] Keating, *Canada and World Order*, p. 97.

Ultimately, the Canadian government became one of the more active members of the UN's Congo operation. Canadian participation, however, reflected as much a concern over the fate of the organization as over threat of the Congo itself. [23]

Mounting public pressure within Canada for participation in the UN mission also played a significant role in the decision to deploy Canadians to the Congo.[24]

Cold War politics again reared their heads when civil war erupted in Cyprus, and Greece and Turkey each threatened military intervention. The Security Council established a peacekeeping force in 1964 to serve as a buffer between Greek and Turkish Cypriots and to maintain law and order. Canada's chief concern in this crisis was the well being of the NATO alliance, which would have been placed in an extremely difficult position if two of its members (Greece and Turkey) went to war against each other. In addition, UN credibility was on the line. France and the USSR refused to pay their assessed financial contributions for the mission, thereby putting the viability of the operation in jeopardy. For reasons of alliance solidarity and concern for the UN, Canada participated in the UN mission.

The fortunes of UN peacekeeping ebbed and flowed during the Cold War, largely as a result of East-West politics. The US, USSR, and China had very different and often incompatible ideological and political objectives and each was able to veto Security Council resolutions that were deemed antithetical to its interests. Ten missions were established prior to 1966, none was created between 1967 and 1973, three were established between 1973 and 1978, and no new missions were created from 1979 to 1987. Overall, the UN peacekeeping missions established during the Cold War were fairly successful at constraining and containing violence.

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[23] Keating, *Canada and World Order*, p. 98.

[24] Andrew F. Cooper, *Canadian Foreign Policy: Old Habits and New Directions*. (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall Canada, 1997), p. 175.

During the Cold War, Canada was the world's foremost peacekeeping country[25], providing not only military personnel but also diplomatic skills and technical resources. Not all the experiences were positive. For example, the resumption of fighting between Israel and Egypt in 1967 following the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers was a bitter disappointment. Overall, however, participation in UN peacekeeping forwarded Canadian goals of promoting international peace and security, bolstering alliance strength and solidarity, and enhancing UN credibility and effectiveness. It raised Canada's profile internationally and showcased Canada's diplomatic prowess and technical expertise. The Cold War tensions that had prevented the permanent members of the Security Council from agreeing to any new missions during the previous nine years began to dissolve in the late 1980s. In 1988, the UN created four important peacekeeping forces, for which it was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize. A new era had begun with the UN Security Council starting to function on basis of great power consensus, as envisaged in *Charter*.

The already complex situation resulting from the East-West polarization became all the more difficult in the 1960s with the addition of the North-South alignments. The pace of decolonization accelerated after the Second World War, and reached its peak in the late 1950s and 1960s. The newly independent states sought UN membership, which is open to all "peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations".[26] During the Cold War, however, judgments as to which countries met the criteria were greatly influenced by ideological considerations. The *Charter* specifies that new members can only be admitted if their admission is recommended by the Security Council and is approved by a two-thirds vote in the General Assembly. By 1955 only nine of the 22 states that had applied for membership had been admitted. Ideological tensions became even more pronounced at the time of the Korean

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[25] "Between 1948 and 1990, Canada took part in the highest number of peacekeeping operations on a comparative basis." Cooper, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 177.

[26] *United Nations Charter*, Article 4.

War. Western countries, which held three vetoes and comprised the majority in the Security Council, were able to block the admission of Eastern bloc countries. The US, France and Britain were concerned that the admission of significant numbers of new states would shift the balance to one that was less favourable to their positions. In retaliation, the USSR vetoed the admission of pro-Western states.

Canada recognized that the UN's credibility and viability required enlarging its membership.   As John Holmes wrote, "The UN could not have survived if it had continued to represent less than half the world's population."[27]   Canada played a pivotal role in breaking the deadlock over the admission of new members.   In spite of incurring the wrath of the US and the latter's threats to stop buying Canadian oil, Paul Martin, then Canada's Minister of Health and Welfare, brokered a package deal to admit 16 states simultaneously.

With the deadlock broken, membership was open to virtually any state that applied[28] and UN membership more than doubled by 1965. The influx of new states, primarily from Africa and Asian transformed the UN in several respects. The Southern members gave issues of economic development as well as decolonization and anti-racism a priority that they had not previously enjoyed. The General Assembly was no longer Western-dominated as a result of the admission of new Southern countries and formerly excluded Eastern bloc states. Its meetings became more unwieldy as a result of the large numbers of participants and the diversity of their interests.   As their numbers grew, Southern demands for a fairer economic system that would promote their economic development became louder and more persistent. The North-South dialogue was carried out in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as in agencies and committees throughout the system and at numerous UN conferences.

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[27] John Holmes, "The United Nations at 40: An Upbeat Assessment", in Clyde Sanger (Ed.), *Canadians and the United Nations* (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1988), p. 25.

[28] Those which continued to be excluded were the partitioned states of Germany, Korea and Vietnam. The Peoples Republic of China was excluded until 1971 on the grounds that Taiwan occupied the China seat.

The term "economic development" only appears once in the *Charter*, in Article 55, where it is seen as a precondition for maintaining peace and stability. Yet in practice, promoting economic development has been an objective of the UN throughout its history.   Approaches to the problems have varied considerably over the years. In the 1950s and 1960s, the UN gave priority to promoting economic growth on the assumption that the benefits of large scale growth would trickle down to all members in society. In practice, many Southern counties did experience significant growth in their gross national products but dire poverty persisted. As a legacy of their colonial pasts, the economies of most Southern countries depended heavily on the export of one or a few primary, unfinished commodities, which commanded lower prices than the South paid for manufactured goods imported from the North. Furthermore, the prices for primary products fluctuated dramatically on world markets. Southern countries sought financial resources from three principal sources: loans from the Bretton Woods Institutions[29], private investments by transnational corporations, and overseas development assistance - all sources controlled by the North and reflecting Northern interests.

In the hope of enhancing their bargaining position by presenting a unified front, 77 Southern countries formed a negotiating bloc, the Group of 77, in 1964. Although the 1960s was declared the First Development Decade, little progress was made towards eradicating world poverty.   Conditions worsened in the 1970s as food and energy prices soared, worldwide inflation flourished, currency exchange rates fluctuated dramatically, and instability prevailed in the global economy.   In 1974, the Group of 77 presented the world with a platform for a New International Economic Order to address the structural impediments to Southern development. Its demands included commodity agreements to stabilize prices for primary products, lower tariff and non-tariff barriers on primary goods from the South, debt relief, increased levels of

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[29] The Bretton Woods Institutions include the International Monetary Fund (1945), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (1945); the International Finance Corporation (1956) and the International Development Association (1960).

development assistance, and greater influence in multilateral decision-making, especially in bodies directly addressing their economic well being.   In spite of ongoing pressure from the Group of 77, whose membership had soon grown to over 100 states, Northern countries systematically rejected proposals for major structural changes which would have resulted in a significant redistribution of resources to the South.

With low commodity prices and high interest rates, Southern debt continued to mount in the 1980s. Northern countries became even less receptive to Southern pleas for a New International Economic Order in the late 1980s, following the election of conservative governments in some of their most powerful members, including the US, UK and Germany. The latter were successful in persuading key agencies within the UN system, particularly the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, to adopt structural adjustment programs. The latter stipulated that as a requirement for receiving loans, Southern countries had to agree to restructure their economies in accordance with the dictates of the international body so as to make their economies more open to international investment and to ensure debt.   Such reforms included currency devaluation, the privatization of state-owned companies, greater emphasis on the export sectors - often at the expense of the domestic production - higher taxes, and large reductions in the public service.   They caused significant hardship for large numbers of people; hence they involved serious political, economic and social costs for Southern countries.

Throughout the Cold War, Canada's macro-level responses to Southern demands for economic development were consistent with those of its principal Western allies. Immediately after the Second World War, most of its aid was given to assist members of the Western alliance to rebuild.[30]   The South only became a focus for aid after the communist victory in China in 1949, when the West became preoccupied with containing communism.[31]

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[30] Cooper, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 213.

[31] Cooper, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 213.

Because the purpose of the aid was to counter the expansion of Soviet influence, the

United Sates pressed its allies to assume part of the burden. Canadian aid thus began,

timidly and somewhat begrudgingly , as an obligation arising from its major alliance

rather than directly from the ethical values of Canadian society.[32]

East-West politics provided a significant impetus for giving, yet alliance politics did not remain

the sole determinants of Canada's aid program, which expanded rapidly and began to target the

world poorest - changes that reflected a strong concern for humanitarian considerations.[33]

Thus, Canada's foreign aid program fulfilled a variety of objectives. It reflected domestic

demands for an ethical response to world poverty as well as a commitment to the Western

alliance's crusade to contain communism. It enhanced Canada's status abroad in at least two

additional ways. The commitment to poverty alleviation demonstrated that Canada was a

responsible and constructive member of the international community.[34]   Having a foreign aid

program dedicated to humane internationalist objectives helped Canada, especially in the latter

1960s, to distance itself from the US and its war in Vietnam.[35]

With the worldwide economic downturn in the late 1970s, Canada, like its major allies,

became much more hard-hearted.   Its aid program became more self-serving, and

humanitarian consideration took a backseat to the promotion of Canada's trade opportunities for

the remainder of the Cold War.[36]

Like most other Western countries, Canada showed little receptivity to Southern

demands for the New International Economic Order. Instead, it focused on the basic needs

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[32] Cranford Pratt, "Ethical values and Canadian foreign policy: Two case studies" *International Journal* 56(1)(2000-2001): 39.

[33] Pratt, "Ethical values and Canadian foreign policy", p. 39.

[34] Cooper, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 210.

[35] Pratt, "Ethical values and Canadian foreign policy", p. 40.

[36] Pratt, "Ethical values and Canadian foreign policy", p. 40.

approach favoured by most donors, which meant giving priority to providing the essentials of life (e.g., food, water and housing) to those in greatest need.

In the 1970s, the General Assembly convened a series of world conferences, each devoted to addressing economic and social problems in a particular issue area. They included the Conference on the Human Environment (1972), Third Law of the Sea Conference (1973-1982); Population Conference (1974); Food Conference (1974); First Conference on Women (1975); Conference on Human Settlements (1976); Water Conference (1977); Conference on Desertification (1977); and Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1978).   In each case, preparatory work for the conference was done by a UN body, which produced negotiating texts that state participants refined into a set of principals and an action plan. In some case, such as the Law of the Sea Conference, a formal treaty was negotiated. The norms emanating from the conferences required implementation by states as well as by new or existing UN bodies. Although some important conferences were held in the 1980s, such as the Third Conference on Women[37], it was not until the 1990s that a pattern of holding an extensive series of major, world conferences, similar to that of the 1970s, reoccurred.

Canada actively participated in all the above-mentioned conferences, presenting position papers, chairing a disproportional numbers of working groups and committees, and proposing compromise solutions on contentious issues.   Canadian leadership was exemplified by Maurice Strong, who served as the secretary-general of the Conference on the Human Environment. Canada's approaches to the conferences were functional and issue-oriented. Its negotiators did not stick to rigid, doctrinaire positions but instead demonstrated substantial degrees of flexibility and their positions evolved as the negotiations progressed. As a result of the skill and hard

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[37] In 1985, the Third Conference on Women produced the *Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000* - a document that identified obstacles to women's advancement, presented strategies for overcoming these barriers, and provided some provisions for monitoring compliance. In comparison with the documents produced at the first two conferences on women, the *Strategies* not only covered a broader range of issues but the issues were treated more concretely and with greater analysis.

work of the Canadian delegation, no country had its interests better promoted in the *Law of the Sea Contention* than Canada.   For example, Canadian negotiators were very successful in getting advantageous provisions to safeguard its rights to harvest salmon by arguing that anadromous species behaved differently from other fish, and thus had to be treated differently. Their issue-oriented approach was also used successfully to argue for a massive extension of Canada's jurisdiction off its east coast to coincide with the geological realities of its very wide continental margin. Clearly some conferences were of much greater importance to Canadian interests than others. Then Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mitchell Sharp, declared the Third Conference on the Law of the Sea to be "the most important diplomatic conference ever held under the auspices of the UN".[38]   The Conference dealt with issues of vital concern to Canada's interests, most particularly coastal state jurisdiction over resource development and pollution control off its extensive coasts.   Canada recognized the important role played by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in providing expertise and exerting pressure to move the agenda ahead at UN conferences, as exemplified by the fact that it provided major funding for the activities at the NGO Tribune, which was held parallel to the 1975 intergovernmental conference on women.[39]

Although issues of high politics enjoyed a much higher profile during the Cold War than did issues of economic and social development, over 75 percent of the UN's regular budget was devoted to the latter. Furthermore, most of the specialized agencies were mandated to address these issues.   Canada was active in both areas and Canadians played a disproportionally large leadership role in the specialized agencies.[40]

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[38] Canada, House of Commons, 29th Parliament, 1st Session, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence (November 6, 1973), 22:21.

[39] Maureen O'Neil, "Women's Rights: Canada's Role and the UN Challenge", *Policy Options* 11(8)(1990): 9.

[40] For example, John Humphrey was instrumental in the establishment of the UN Division of Human Rights; Brock Chisholm was the founding director general of the World Health Organization; James Harrison served as assistant director general of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and Napoléon LeBlanc was a member of its executive board; and Margaret Catley-Carlson served as deputy executive director of operations for the

From the above overview of Canada's participation at the creation of the UN and during the Cold War years, certain themes emerge. They are outlined below.

PERVASIVE THEMES IN CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY AT THE UN
1.   Canadian foreign policy at the UN has been largely reactive to external developments

The international environment and the actions of other states set the international agenda, to which the decision-makers in all countries had to respond, and the parameters within which they operated. Not even the superpowers were able to dictate policy within the UN, although they were much better able to initiate changes and elicit response than were the middle powers and smaller states. Plans for the UN - its structure, objectives and decision-making procedures - were developed by the Great powers. In San Francisco, middle and smaller states proposed reforms and were able to get some modest changes accepted.   Overall, however, it was the Great Power's blue print that formed the basis for the UN.

Crises in the realm of peace and security were all externally generated. They comprised local and regional conflicts in other parts of the world what were exacerbated by Cold War tensions.   Canada had little to do with the process of decolonization, which led to the creation of new states seeking international recognition of their newly acquired status through UN membership. Canada played a creative role in facilitating their admission but its initiative was in response to the need to protect the UN's credibility from charges that it was unrepresentative and from the possible threat of Soviet withdrawal. Gross inequities in the international economic and monetary systems caused the growing numbers of Southern members to become more vocal in their demands for a New International Economic Order.   In short, the two major dichotomies

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UN Children's Emergency Fund. These individuals reminisce about their experiences in Sanger, *Canadians and the United Nations*.

within the UN that profoundly affected its operations, the East-West and the North-South

splits, were not of Canada's making nor could it control them.   Canada's involvement

with peacekeeping and foreign aid, both of which became major foci in its foreign policy,

resulted from a need to address dangerous crises, in the case of the former, and

pressures from allies and the Group of 77, in the case of the latter.

2.   Self-interest has been the primary motivation for action

>   Myths have developed about the first two decades of the UN's history being a
>
> "Golden Age" of Canadian foreign policy - the age of "Pearsonian Internationalism".
>> "Pearsonian internationalism" has usually been equated in Canadian political
>> lexicons with the bold, independent, disinterested pursuit of good in the
>> international community and especially with wholehearted approval for the UN
>> and its works. [41]

Implicit in the term is the idea of a country altruistically and actively promoting the good

of the international community. Scholars caution against an uncritical acceptance of this

mythology.[42] Contrary to the idealized concepts, Canadian foreign policy tended to be

more low key and cautious than activist.[43]   Nor was Canadian foreign policy particularly

altruistic. On the contrary, it was firmly grounded in the government perception of the

national interest. Throughout the founding of the UN, Canadian politicians and

diplomats focused on maximizing Canada's positions. Having a strong and viable UN

was definitely in the interests of a country concerned with international peace and

security. Furthermore, the UN offered considerably better prospects for advancing many

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[41] Mackenzie, "Canada and the United Nations, Then and Now", p. 77.

[42] John Holmes, "The United Nations at 40", p. 24. See also Mackenzie, "Canada and the United Nations, Then and Now".

[43] Keating, *Canada and World Order*, p. 26; Cooper, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 39; and Mackenzie, "Canada and the United Nations, Then and Now", p. 74.

policy objectives than it would have had in the bilateral negotiations with the infinitely more powerful US. As a result of these considerations, Canada gave higher priority to the establishment of the UN than to pushing to maximize the position of smaller powers. It is important to remember that in the early days of the UN, there was no guarantee that it would succeed. The League of Nations had failed, the wartime alliance had broken down, and the use of the veto was preventing the Security Council from fulfilling its role, all of which appeared to be harbingers of a unpromising future.[44]

Which Canadian interests received highest priority varied over time. In the Korean Crisis and at the time of the US war in Vietnam, Canada sought to curb US unilateralism and its potential to seriously undermine the UN. In the Suez Crisis, priority went to safeguarding the Western alliance. Of course, being physically located between the two superpowers, Canada also had a strong vested interest in defusing a situation that could have triggered direct confrontations between the US and Soviet Union and escalated into World War III.   Although altruism did play a role in Canadian aid policies from the 1950s through to the late 1970s, most policies were geared first and foremost to forwarding Canada's own immediate interests.   The functionalist principle strongly reflected self-interest as it was used to justify securing special concessions for Canada to enhance its influence and status.

3.   Canada was firmly committed to the success of the UN

For reasons for self-interest that are outlined above, Canada was a consistently strong supporter of the UN . In San Francisco, it gave higher priority to ensuring the UN's establishment than to trying to secure additional powers for itself.   Throughout the UN's history, Canada has paid its allocated share of the organization's budget on time and in full. The UN promotes international peace and stability, which are intrinsically

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[44] Interview with Hector Mackenzie, Senior Departmental Historian and Academic Outreach Advisor, Department of Foreign Affairs. (Ottawa, March 19, 2004).

important to Canada's national security and economic well being. It also provides a forum for negotiation where middle powers like Canada can cooperate to, at least partially, offset the strength of the great powers. For example, Canada has never made any headway in bilateral dealings with the US to get the latter to accept Canadian sovereignty over the North-West Passage. At the Third Law of the Sea Conference, Canada was able to secure the "Arctic Exception", which gives special jurisdictional rights to coastal states whose exclusive economic zones are ice covered water.[45] This is not a recognition of sovereignty, but it can be seen as an important step forward in building a claim that the passage is an internal waterway.

 While Canada's commitment to the UN has been consistently strong, it has not been unquestioning or uncritical. It has frequently called for reforms to improve the functioning of the organization and to facilitate better the realization of Canadian objectives. In the early and mid-1940s, Canada sought to amend the Great powers' plans for the Security Council by arguing along functionalist lines that representation should be based on contribution to the functioning of the organization. The Trudeau government's *Foreign Policy for Canadians* was unenthusiastic about the UN and called for a rejuvenation of its structure, but it also committed Canada to participating in the reform. Efforts in this regard have been met with fairly minimal success[46] and Canada and other members of the UN continue to press for reform to this day.

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[45] Article 234 gives coastal states "the right to adopt and enforce non-discriminatory laws and regulations for the prevention, reduction and control of marine pollution from vessels in ice covered areas within the limits of the exclusive economic zone..." United Nations, *Law of the Sea Convention* (New York, 1983), p. 84.

[46] Changes to the UN *Charter* have been few because they require the approval of two-thirds of the General Assembly and ratification by two-thirds of the Security Council. Each of the Permanent Members can veto formal amendments to the *Charter*. The *Charter* was amended for the first time in 1965 - largely in response to Southern demands for greater representation. Membership in the Security Council was expanded from 11 to 15 and the voting majority was increased from seven to nine. At the same time, membership in the Economic and Social Council grew from 18-27. In 1973, the Economic and Social Council was further enlarged to the 54-members which it continues to have today.

4.   The predominant influence of the great powers and the need to accommodate them

          As discussed in the first theme, the framework of the UN was largely determined

by the US, UK and USSR. The organization's structure, objectives, principles and

decision-making procedures, in turn, conditioned the role that it and its members could

exercise in the world. The permanent members of the Security Council played the

dominant role in deciding which crises were brought to the attention of the Security

Council and how they were addressed.   In addition to their voting privileges, they had

extensive military and economic resources, which could be used to affect the voting

behaviour of other states by granting rewards and inflicting punishments or threatening

to do so.

5.   The need to mitigate US unilateralism

          Closely related to theme #4 were the specific challenges associated with trying to

curb the unilateral impulses of Canada's closest ally, the US, which emerged shortly

after the founding of the UN and which have been an ongoing concern for Canada.

During the Korean War, Canada worked to limit US dominance which threatened to

reduce the UN to a mere tool of American foreign policy and to provoke the Soviet Union

to leave the organization. The credibility and effectiveness of the UN depended on

retaining the membership of both superpowers.   The US war in Vietnam and the Cuban

Missile Crises exemplified US unilateralism. The UN was by-passed, which raised

questions about its relevance and threatened its viability - all of which was antithetical to

Canada's interests.

6.	The ubiquitous influence of Cold War politics

East-West tensions pervaded virtually all areas of UN endeavour during its first 45 years. Canada was never a neutral mediator between rival blocs; instead it was a staunch member of the Western alliance. As such, Canada devoted more effort to mediating disputes within the Western block than in seeking to defuse East-West tensions.[47]   Canada's policies on peacekeeping and foreign aid clearly had Cold War dimensions. UN peacekeeping missions enabled Canada to contribute to the maintenance of alliance solidarity and to reduce the risk of superpower conflict. Although not its only reason for giving, Canada, like its Western allies, directed foreign aid to curb the spread of Soviet influence.   In the Cold War, military prowess was particularly important to a state's power and status.   Both peacekeeping and foreign aid became Canadian niches - ways of making a significant contributions to the international community, in general, and the Western alliance, in particular, that helped to deflect criticism of its relatively small military contributions.

> Like donning the blue helmet of UN peacekeeping, development assistance allowed Canada to pay its dues to the Western alliance in a different fashion and so to offset its image as a 'free rider.'[48]

Just as Cold War politics exerted a dominant inflect in the areas of peace and security, they were also influential in efforts to address economic and social issues. When the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was put to a vote in the Third Committee of the General Assembly in 1948, the Canadian delegation abstained, ostensibly on the grounds that the Canadian government could not make commitments that impinged on

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[47] Kim Nossal points out, "On balance, it is clear that if the Canadian government during this period was active in mediation, it was more intra-bloc than *inter-bloc* diplomacy." *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 58. The importance of maintaining good relations within the alliance is also noted by Andy Cooper, who writes,   "Canada concentrated on being a 'helpful fixer' in the intra-bloc context: attempting to defuse tensions among Western powers (during the 1956 Suez crisis) or urging restraint on the alliance leader (during the Korean War)." *Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 38.

[48] Cooper, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, p., 213.

provincial jurisdiction.[49]   In taking this stand, Canada found itself at odds with most

countries, including its traditional allies, and in the company of the Soviet bloc and South

Africa, which did nothing to enhance Canada's image abroad. Lester Pearson, then

Secretary of State for External Affairs, worked hard and successfully over the following

three days to convince the Canadian government to change its position. Canada joined

the vast majority of UN members in voting for the *Universal Declaration* when it was

adopted in General Assembly.

**1.   Changes in governments have not resulted in radical shifts in the direction
of Canadian foreign policy at the UN**

Overall, Canada's policies and positions at the UN were guided by similar macro-

level objectives thorough the Cold War period. It sought to maintain alliance solidarity,

international peace and stability in a bipolar world, and a strong and viable UN, and to

enhance Canada's status internationally through carving out niches where it could play

visible and constructive roles. There were, nonetheless, significant differences among

governments in the priority accorded to the UN and in the priority given specific

objectives. For example, Lester Pearson, with his extensive experience with both the

League of Nations and the UN, had a level of expertise and a strong sense of

commitment to the UN that none of the others had.   Neither John Diefenbaker nor Brian

Mulroney came to office with international experience or major foreign policy objectives

apropos the UN, although both saw, at least some, advantage to membership in the

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[49] The details of this case are well explained by William A. Schabas, "Canada and the Adoption
of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" *McGill Law Journal* 43(1998): 403-441.
Schabas argues that the real reason for Canada's stance was Prime Minister St. Laurent's
concern that right to employment in the public service as well as the freedom of speech,
freedom of association, and freedom assembly could be used by the Communists. (p. 439).

organization.[50] Pierre Trudeau came to office calling for a radical new approach to

Canadian foreign policy - one that would focus on objectives directly related to Canada's

domestic well being and downplay the role of 'helpful fixer' on a wide range of issues.[51]

His government's *Foreign Policy for Canadians* demonstrated little enthusiasm for the

UN and criticized Canadian foreign policy for being too preoccupied with issues of peace

and security, including peacekeeping.   It was not until 1978 that Trudeau spoke before

the General Assembly, a forum that he regarded as a sterile talk shop that spent far too

much time on set speeches and too little on finding practical solutions to world

problems.[52] In the long run, the rhetoric of Trudeau's new approach to Canadian

foreign policy did not translate into radical new stands at the UN.

> By 1984, he would have discovered, by turns, the utility of Canada's military
> alignments, the usefulness of peacekeeping, and the helpfulness of helpful
> fixing.[53]

There were, nonetheless, some significant differences in the foci of different

governments. The Trudeau government was much more concerned with bilingualism

and biculturalism than any previous government had been; hence it was not surprising

that it diversified the pool of recipients of its foreign aid from a concentration on

Commonwealth countries to one that also targeted Francophone countries.

8.   The government was not a unitary, monolithic actor.

        The unitary actor model never described the Canadian government, although it

came closer to reflecting reality during the first two decades of the UN's existence, when

Canadian foreign policy was made by a relatively small, elite group of politicians and

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[50] John Hilliker, "Waging the Last Peace". Lecture given at the University of Western Ontario,
November 22, 2004.

[51] Hilliker, "Waging the Last Peace".

[52] Hilliker, "Waging the Last Peace".

[53] Nossal, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 181.

diplomats from the Department of External Affairs, than was the case thereafter. The

elitism of the earlier period was diluted when Trudeau came to power committed to

opening the decision-making process to a much wider range of actors.   The Canadian

government had always comprised individuals holding diverse positions who competed

and cooperated to promote their concepts of the national interest and their strategies for

realizing foreign policy objectives but the number and diversity of the actors involved

expanded considerably.

As noted in theme #1, the external environment created conditions to which

Canada had to respond; however, Canadian decision-makers had choice as to the

specific responses they made to international development and the allocation of

priorities among objectives. For example, key Canadian diplomats held significantly

different negotiating priorities for the San Francisco Conference. Norman Robertson

and Hume Wrong gave highest priority to ensuring that the UN was founded; hence they

were willing to make considerable concessions to the Great powers, whereas Escott

Reid and Lester Pearson argued more strongly in favour of greater roles for the smaller

powers.[54] In the end, the more conservative and cautious views of Norman Robertson

and Hume Wrong prevailed.[55]

9.   Overall domestic public opinion has exerted little influence over Canada's specific
      policies the UN

While public opinion did not determine the specifics of Canada's policies at the

UN; it did play a role in parameter setting and in the priority accorded to certain issues.

The Canadian public expected Canada to be a world leader in peacekeeping and a good

international citizen in giving foreign aid, and government policies reflected these

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[54] Hilliker, "Waging the Last Peace".

[55] Hilliker, "Waging the Last Peace".

expectations. While Canada was never a major military contributor to the Western alliance, it was able to "offset its image as a free rider" by being seen as a major contributor to peacekeeping and a responsible citizen in its commitments to aid those less fortunate in less developed countries.[56] In some cases, such as peacekeeping and foreign aid, public opinion did set parameters within which policy-makers had to operate.

CONCLUSION

The 45 year period discussed above saw some profound developments: the rapid shift from the alignments of the Second World War to those of the Cold War; the extent to which East-West politics came to pervade all areas of endeavour; the accelerated process of decolonization which created large numbers of newly independent countries; and the radical transformation of the UN's character as a result of the influx of new members. All these developments profoundly affected Canadian foreign policy and set the parameters within which it had to operate. The nine themes identified in this paper prevailed for most, if not all, of the 45 year period. Further study will be required to determine the extent to which they remained relevant in the Post-Cold War era, in which Cold War preoccupations with bipolar politics and national security gave way to a far broader set of security concerns, where forces of globalization accelerated bringing new challenges to state sovereignty and widening the gap between rich and poor; and where non-state actors proliferated and became increasingly important.

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[56] Cooper, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 213.