

All of these, as well as erratic United States foreign policy, world population growth, and Third World debt, rank higher in the concerns of Canadians than the fear of Soviet aggression. And this low ranking of the Soviet threat was confirmed a few months later by an in-depth study of Canadian opinion on peace and security issues conducted by the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security.

From these polls it appears that the issues now concerning Canadians most deeply are difficult long-term problems that are beyond the control of any one nation or group of nations. They cannot be solved within the five-year (or even shorter) time-frame of any government, and tend to be overlooked when governments decide how to spend their money.

Environmental degradation, disastrous global climate change, growing poverty in the midst of increasing affluence, the rickety imbalances in the international economy, the rapid pace of population growth – these are the real security problems of the future, and more and more people have come to recognize it. These problems have the potential to threaten not merely the immediate security of many nations, but even the continuing viability of human society in the coming decades.

In fact they have already plunged some countries into crisis; for others, the crisis may be a decade or two ahead. But in all nations the warning signs are at hand of very severe future difficulties, tougher to handle than anything we have had to deal with in the past.

THE NEW CHALLENGES BEFORE US AS CITIZENS of this globe present Canada with great opportunities for constructive action and leadership. It would be foolish to suggest that we can save the world; but what we can do is to put our own house in order to meet these future challenges, and seek allies with whom we can move the world in a constructive direction that will hold out hope for the future of the human race.

The purpose of this book is to stimulate public interest in and debate about these important issues, leading on, we would hope, to action. Fundamentally the issues that we explore have to do with Canada's changing relationships with the rest of the world. We have not kept pace with many of these changes, and are scarcely prepared for their probable impact on us.

*First, the economy:* Though we are one of the richest and most fortunate nations on Earth, and a member of the club of the seven most powerful industrialized countries, our traditional dependence on the export of raw materials has not fitted us particularly well for the dramatic changes that are now occurring in the world. There is no doubt that everything else we might wish to do to create a decent and improved life for our own citizens (as well as those elsewhere) depends on our maintaining a viable and productive economy, but there are indications that the way ahead will be very much more difficult than the last forty years.

In spite of these problems, if we are to give a lead to halting man-made climate-change, we will have to give teeth to the now-accepted idea that our Canadian economy must become indefinitely sustainable in environmental and resource terms. First of all this means extremely difficult – one might almost say, revolutionary – decisions about energy use.

*Second, our own society:* We cannot remain indifferent to the changing demographic situation. Vast populations of people, excluded from their share of the world's goods, are ready to move, and it is not an option for us to turn away. We will continue to receive increasing num-

bers of Third World immigrants, and too little thought is being given to the likely implications of our changing population for our social relationships. But if it is (as some Canadians believe) a possibility that this fortunate country might provide an example of tolerant and decent living to the rest of the world, certainly we cannot expect that example to spring to life without immense effort, ingenuity, and the conscious building of bridges between different peoples.

*Third, the environment:* No one in the world can any longer avoid the environmental warning signs. We belong to that segment of the world's population that is making far too heavy demands on Earth's resources, and we are deeply responsible for trying to find a way to overcome the problems of air pollution, water, and soil degradation, ocean despoliation, and atmospheric changes that are leading to almost certain modifications in global climate. We have to start thinking about these matters. As a nation we have to become more economical and less wasteful in

our style of life, and we will soon have to start to divert resources into measures that will begin to solve these problems.

But that is only half of it: we must contribute more than we are doing now to helping the under-endowed majority in the world improve their lives, and to bring to a halt their destruction of the landscapes they depend on. To the extent that we are responsible for this, through our economic and trading policies, we have to take corrective measures by applying what the Brundtland commissioners called "a foreign policy for the environment."

For example, it is now accepted that the people of the world cannot afford to allow the tropical rain forests to be destroyed. Yet it is not enough simply to exhort tropical countries not to cut their forests. A considerable transfer of resources will be needed to make it possible for these impoverished countries to save these forests. And there is no sign yet that our governments are ready to make that necessary commitment. We have to find a way to look at

the world with a proper sense of our ecological interdependence, to set our sights on long-term survival rather than short-term prosperity.

*Fourth, the international sphere:* Canadians, placed on the globe midway between the United States and the Soviet Union, have a particular stake in helping the world maintain peace, reduce the threat of nuclear war, and bring new military technologies under international control. Many believe that Canada could get a bigger bang for its buck by spending whatever spare billions it has on reinforcing international organizations, strengthening international cooperation, and helping to keep the peace around the world, than by becoming fixated on the evidently impossible task of defending our huge coastlines from our largely imaginary adversaries.

Peace, order, and good government have always been Canadian ideals, and we should work to make them global. □

1. This list has been compiled by Eric Solem, of the Operational Research and Analysis Establishment, Directorate of Strategic Analysis, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, in his interesting monograph *Futures of the International System*, Project Report No. 143, May 1980, p. 49.

2. Theodore Gordon, quoted by Eric M. Roher, on page 2 of his monograph *Planning in the Modern State*, No. 139 in the series of Project Reports issued by the Operational Research Establishment of the Department of National Defence.

3. These conclusions were reached by 450 international experts who gathered in Ottawa in 1986 to examine the progress made towards sustainable development in the five years following the publication of the World Conservation Strategy report in 1981. Their overall conclusion was that there had been almost no discernible change in government attitudes.

