

The government paper was necessarily still at a fairly general level, and will call for specific and more detailed follow-up in a number of areas, but it did clarify the Government's intentions to maintain flexible and competent armed forces, and to ensure that Canada plays an active role in the historical evolution of Europe.

One major debate that may still be unresolved is whether, with reduced security threats and force-strengths, Canada should or must move further away from the aspiration to field comprehensive military capabilities, on the land, sea, and in the air. Might Canada, on the other hand, have to accept the possibility of strengthening "niches" of special Canadian defence expertise to contribute to international peace and security requirements.

The government statement still does not confront as directly as it might the fact that for Canada, UN peacekeeping (and perhaps peace-enforcement as well) may represent primary — as opposed to ancillary — defence challenges. It now seems safe to assume that the coming demand for UN peacekeeping and observer forces is likely to be closer to that of the last three years (in which 5 operations have been launched) than to the average level of the previous forty-three years, which saw only 14 operations in total. Given Canada's unparalleled leadership in this area, the new demands, and the growing possibilities for involving more nations in this work, it is probably going to be necessary for the Canadian Government to define a special strategy for UN peacekeeping and stability operations. Ottawa will have to be prepared to make clear, to Canadians and others, the kinds of capabilities that we can, and cannot, muster; how we can use our experience and reputation to involve others more effectively; and how we respond to some of the new types of "peacekeeping" ideas and issues that are now proliferating.⁹

It is time to recognize that UN peacekeeping is a global "growth industry" in which Canada is the world leader. It is a source of healthy national pride and extraordinarily strong public support for Canada's armed forces, when those of many countries are hard-pressed to justify their existence to voters and taxpayers. The proper management of this unique Canadian asset in the next few years does deserve some particularly focussed attention, by both foreign policy and defence planners.

Given the changed, but still unpredictable, situation in Europe, the government's planned reductions — with a continuing commitment to a 1,100 person residual force with air-reinforcement and naval contributions