

B) Common Security Is Already Evolving

Is it realistic to expect sovereign nations to be bound by the authority of international institutions? The epic reality of our time is that in fact we are already moving in exactly that direction. Nations *have* been allowing themselves, however parsimoniously, to be bound into an increasingly sophisticated international legal and institutional order.

At the centre of that international order is the U.N., which now includes 159 nations representing virtually every human being on the planet. Around the U.N. is a whole array of other world bodies, such as the World Health Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Maritime Organization, all of which have their councils, their laws and their procedures. There is a whole array of complex institutional structures already in place which work to solve conflict in a peaceful way through the due process of those bodies. Nations have been developing the practice and habit of working this way with other nations for more than half a century. The Law of the Sea Treaty--which lays down a new legal regime for the world's oceans, creates a new kind of judicial body for disputes arising out of the treaty, and, as well, the world's first global public corporation--gives an idea of just how far we've come.

The complex process of institution building at the global level is already going on as a continuous process. There is no question, then, that the requirements of common security are humanly and politically possible and achievable. Security, in fact, is about the only area where very little has been happening. But even there, progress has been made. Progress is possible. At least we have codified on paper a global consensus that wars of aggression are illegal. We have a rudimentary international security apparatus in the U.N. Security Council.

If progress in this area is theoretically possible, then it is also theoretically possible that a highly-conscious, concerted effort by a few countries could advance the process more quickly. There are many lesser obstacles that could be removed. There are many initiatives that could be readily achieved to transform the nature of the process itself.

C) Common Security as a Comprehensive Foreign Policy Framework

A common security policy would build on Canada's unique strengths and foreign policy traditions of support for the U.N. and multilateral institutions. For Canada, common security would not be a radical departure from what Canada has been doing, but a reaffirmation and extension of elements of current policy involving a rebalancing of priorities.

Canada is uniquely qualified to organize internationally for common security for several reasons:

- We have an established tradition of support for the U.N. and for peace-keeping (a Canadian innovation).
- We have an international reputation for our ability to act as mediator.
- We have a geographical justification for taking a more active international leadership role, since we are the battlefield situated between the superpowers.