

# THE INSTITUTE FIVE YEARS ON

## A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION



**BISSONNETTE:** Geoffrey, maybe you could begin with a summary of your personal thoughts after the five years you have spent at the Institute.

**PEARSON:** I think that in the future we are going to have to try to come to some conclusions about whether we ought to select more carefully what we do, and how, in particular to mix Canadian interests with international questions....

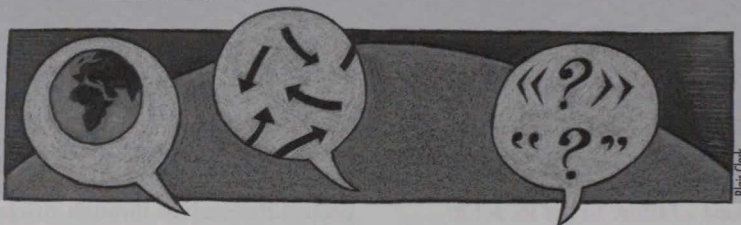
The meaning of security is now so blurred that it can be stretched to cover almost anything. The Prime Minister was talking yesterday, at the United Nations, mainly about poverty and the environment and setting up a new centre on the environment. Well, who knows, five years from now there may be a dozen Canadian institutes dealing with various aspects of international security. So what will we do then? Will we be compelled to concentrate on more traditional definitions of security – of military questions primarily – and leave the other aspects of security to more specialized bodies. I hope not.

**COX:** Do you feel that the Institute needs to be bound by the intention of the creators?

**PEARSON:** I think that the Act creating the Institute is wide enough to encompass, or to justify, whatever we want to do. Conflict resolution can be interpreted to mean conflicts created by environmental problems, poverty problems, any problems leading to conflicts. So I don't think that the Act inhibits us. It is rather the nature of the selection process about what we do, given the various alternatives.

In June 1984, the House of Commons adopted, in a unanimous vote, Bill C-32, an act creating the *Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security*. In the years since, what has been accomplished? Does CIIPS suffer from being located in Ottawa? Is it too anglophone? How will CIIPS adapt its mandate to a rapidly changing world?

To reflect on these and other questions, at the end of September *Peace & Security* invited three individuals with varying connections to CIIPS to a roundtable discussion. The participants are **Lise Bissonnette**, journalist and since 1986 a member of CIIPS Board of Directors; **David Cox**, member of the department of Political Studies at Queen's University and former CIIPS Director of Research; and **Geoffrey Pearson**, departing Executive Director of CIIPS and former Canadian ambassador to the USSR.



**BISSONNETTE:** As far as the Institute's role on the international scene is concerned – I know I'm being provocative here – I have always been under the impression that we're simply trying to position ourselves in the arena of large international conferences. To achieve that, we conduct research on just about anything, as you say – the Middle East here, South-East Asia there – since the objective is to be invited to Moscow one day, the next day to Stockholm and the day after to Washington, and later to Pakistan. I think we've done it, it's been accomplished, the Institute is known, I should imagine, all over the world. But the Institute has no "Canadian specificity," to use a Quebecois term, on the international scene, and that is the dimension I would like to see grow. What subjects should we be working on? Is it because Canada is a specialist in verification that the

Institute must necessarily do research on verification?

**PEARSON:** I haven't, in my own mind, decided what is the best approach. Our mandate is also to educate, and it is primarily to educate and inform Canadians, not Swedes, Norwegians, or Palestinians. And therefore, we are responsive to the interests of Canadians from whatever point of view. Whether, for example, they want to know about cruise missiles, on the one hand, or about what is going on in Namibia on the other. In both cases, Canada's interests are involved. So a shotgun approach can be defended. But I think it is something we have to decide; whether we want to pursue that shotgun approach, responding to people's interests, or whether we want to concentrate

on particular things, as other institutes have done and have gained their reputation from doing.

The IISS [International Institute for Strategic Studies] in London is known for the East-West orientation of its studies and has gained a reputation, globally. The Soviets used to quote IISS statistics to me, when I asked about Soviet arms questions. So, will there come a time when they quote CIIPS views? Do we want to have a flagship project of some kind, which would give us a particular profile internationally? I think my view is "no," because, again, we are oriented towards Canadians.

**BISSONNETTE:** Fine, but if that is true, Geoffrey, how do you justify all the international activities of the Institute?

**PEARSON:** Well, we are invited to conferences because Canada is a respected country, and in that sense, we reflect our foreign policy. Mr. Clark goes to all kinds of meetings that he might rather not go to....

Canada has close political ties with at least half the world's nation states, through the Commonwealth, and la Francophonie and so on. The Institute is more or less in that situation, so I think that it is probably inevitable that we should be present at many of these international meetings. We can go to these meetings, bring back what we learn, and digest it for Canadian purposes, so that it becomes understandable to Canadian journalists and Canadians who are interested in these matters. But we don't have to study all questions.

**COX:** Is the answer not that you can do both? You respond, with all the dangers of dispersal, to the