

THE REAL SECURITY CHALLENGES FACING CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

A) The Larger Dimensions of our Security Problem

We usually think of security as meaning freedom from the threat of attack by other states. But security in its largest sense means freedom from danger generally, and in today's world we confront an array of dangers such as the human race has never known.

It is a paradox that we will bear almost any cost to counter threats to our security when we perceive them coming from a rival political regime. Yet when it comes to all those other perils--which are plain to see coming over the horizon; about which we can make predictions with greater certainty than we can ever predict anything about the intentions of our political adversaries; which are, in fact, already causing death to millions and wrecking the life support systems of the planet--in the face of those other emergencies we are almost recklessly sanguine. We are resigned. We are passive.

Between our defense expenditures, on the one hand, and our expenditures on behalf of a stable global ecology on the other, the disparity in the level of our concern and effort is so incomprehensibly wide that it must cause us seriously to question the reliability of the whole of our social and biological mechanisms of threat perception, evaluation and response.

The briefest over-view of just some of the other global problems which confront Canadians gives us a sense of the real dimension of the security crisis which confronts the makers of Canada's foreign policy:

Population Growth

By the year 2000, the world's population will be 6 billion. It continues to double every 30 years. If the Zero Population Growth level of reproduction--only enough births to replace people who die--were reached in the developed world by the year 2000 and in the developing countries by 2040, the world's population would eventually level off at 15 billion. At the current rate of progress in population planning this is actually an optimistic estimate, *a best case scenario!*

Increasing population will mean greater competition for scarce world resources. Put bluntly, the more people, the fewer resources there will be for each, including future generations of Canadians. Third World poverty will increase the likelihood of unrest and war, adding to the chances of the superpowers becoming entangled in a war themselves. But the greatest crisis in population growth is the toll on the earth's life support systems of so many people just trying to stay alive. Consider the effect on the planet of only 4 billion people.

Environment

In 4 decades, half the world's forests have been felled. By the year 2000, half of what remains will be gone. We are losing the tropical rainforests, the lungs of the Earth, at an