

INTRODUCTION

For the second dramatic year in a row, the world's political system has rocked and shaken on its axis. Even before the Cold War was finally interred with German reunification and with treaties on arms reduction and future cooperation in Europe, a major new challenge to world order had opened up in the Persian Gulf, and the whole world was scrambling to design and maintain an appropriate response. Meanwhile Canadians, citizens of "the world's first international nation", as Barbara Ward described us some 20 years ago, who are already the envy of the world for virtually everything except our climate, and whose stakes in the future shape of the world are as high as anybody's, have somehow managed to turn in upon ourselves and put our own extraordinary country on the world's endangered list.

At the international level we are now confronted with issues of peace, war, law and order that are more complex and more exciting than at any time in living memory. A global hegemonic struggle is coming to an end, without the major war that has classically been the end to such struggles. The re-ordering of the international system which must follow the end of such a struggle is taking place, but it must do so without the structure of a Congress of Vienna, a Conference of Versailles or San Francisco, and without the simplifying hierarchy of power among victors and vanquished. Simultaneously, and possibly even more importantly, this re-ordering can, and must, now include the majority of the world's states and the majority of the world's peoples who have largely been bystanders in the past, but who will stand and watch no longer. The world has a brief "window of opportunity" to set some new patterns for managing conflict and cooperation on a global scale. Otherwise, new patterns of confrontation will almost certainly set in and they could be at least as ugly as the Cold War and much more unstable.

This second "year of living dangerously" at the global level has revealed how primitive is both our understanding of world order and our institutions for managing it. The great simplifying structure of ideological and military confrontation in the Cold War pitted two universalist ideals of international society against one other; in the process it overshadowed both the continuing brutal anarchic tendencies in interstate behaviour and the contrary tendency to a gradual elabora-