



Another important outside force that could accelerate democratization is the positive role of international organizations. It has been argued that international organizations, such as the European Union, have helped expand the domain of democratic states through cooperative agreements, loose economic associations, and "embryonic strategic interests."

Conclusion and Policy Options

Challenges and Opportunities for Canada's Post-Modern Foreign Policy Environment

It can be argued that Canada is in a post-modern foreign policy environment characterized by: an absence of a strategic threat; the deconstruction of nations and nationality; and a shift from the importance of material resources in international affairs to the importance of "soft power" and values. In light of this, there is a need to reconsider the directions of Canadian foreign policy.²⁶

While some argue that "small powers that moralize" have no useful role to play in international relations, others applaud Canada's middle-power foreign policy traditions and recognize Canada's ability to build trust and contribute to conflict resolution in the world. Canada's continued commitment to promoting multilateralism in Washington and elsewhere, and its efforts to support the United Nations system are widely recognized. It has been recommended that Canada encourage and facilitate the involvement of Arabs in discussions and dialogues on foreign policy. Canada could also support non-governmental organizations and emerging civil societies in Arab states. As well, Canada

could undertake specific initiatives to address the "root causes" of conflict such as improving literacy and skills education in societies undergoing modernization transformations.

Canadian values of human rights, democracy, respect for diversity, rule of law, and civility remain valuable assets in addressing global divisions. Canada's unique experiences in multiculturalism can also be applied to global needs and could play a useful role in conflict resolution. Through active implementation of these values, Canada may be well-placed to take a leading role in the promotion of global governance.

However, difficult policy choices may arise as a consequence of the choice between countering extremist ideologies and groups and supporting moderate Muslims. In particular, concerns arise from the expansion of a definition of "militant Islam" that threatens human rights. Some observers note that the perceived post-September 11th prejudice against Muslims is disturbing. If individual rights are alienated in war against "militant Islam," the West runs the risk of marginalizing moderate Muslims (both at home and abroad). As well, supporting secular, undemocratic regimes that are seen to be opposed to "militant Islam" can often mean legitimizing authoritarian governments that do not enjoy popular support.

The Importance of Dialogue, both in Canada and Abroad

Canada has an important role to play in developing better models for discourse with others and in creating fora to foster dialogue among Jews, Christians, Muslims and others.

²⁶ Josef Joffe, interview in online video for Thinkers' Retreat: Clash of Civilizations? (2002), available at the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development website (www.cfp-pec.gc.ca).