

Nor is peace in the Pacific all that secure. As the government's 1995 white paper pointed out, "there are serious security challenges in the region including unresolved border disputes, human rights abuses, an increase in weapons acquisitions, ecological degradation, population growth, and narcotics trafficking." By way of examples, think of Hong Kong's uncertain future; the unstable division of the two Koreas; jurisdictional disputes in the South China Sea; the contested future of Taiwan; and environmental conflicts over cross-border pollution and fisheries. Among the big powers there is an impression of "a hardening of attitudes," as one study expressed it, in Japan, China and the United States. The U.S. strategic presence in the Western Pacific remains oddly ambiguous, and at the other edge of Asia-Pacific is India. Economic growth, the great success of the region, itself creates inequalities, migrations, and other elements of domestic and inter-state discontent.

Unlike Europe and the Atlantic community, Asia-Pacific has scarcely begun to organize institutions for preventing or resolving regional conflicts. As yet, (and despite some Canadian efforts) Asian governments have shown at most a slow enthusiasm for institutionalizing co-operative security in the area.

So this is the context: Economic growth that brings both wealth and social stresses to Asia-Pacific countries; multiple risks of internal and cross-boundary conflicts; little institutional experience of multilateral co-operation in the region; and a set of Canadian foreign-policy objectives (prosperity, security, the projection of Canadian values) that may sometimes work at cross-purposes. These are some of the factors that Canadians will need to remember in proposing policy for Canada's Asia-Pacific relations. Now to the choices, and the compromises. . . .