

TIME TO CHANGE

CANADA'S PLACE IN A WORLD OF CRISIS

Drawing together the knowledge and expertise of a dozen research institutes, government departments and universities, the Institute for Peace and Security has produced a critical new book on how Canada might face the major emerging threats to international security.

BY BOYCE RICHARDSON

IN THE LAST YEARS OF THE 1980s people everywhere have begun to understand the scale of the immense changes that lie ahead for human society. Of course we are always changing; but often these changes have crept up and overtaken us without most people realizing what was under way. The era of satellite communications has ended that. Nations that only ten years ago were closed off to the major intellectual and technological influences sweeping much of the globe now recognize that they can no longer hide behind guarded borders, while in more fortunate parts of the world, long-held, comforting notions of technical and economic superiority have been fatally undermined.

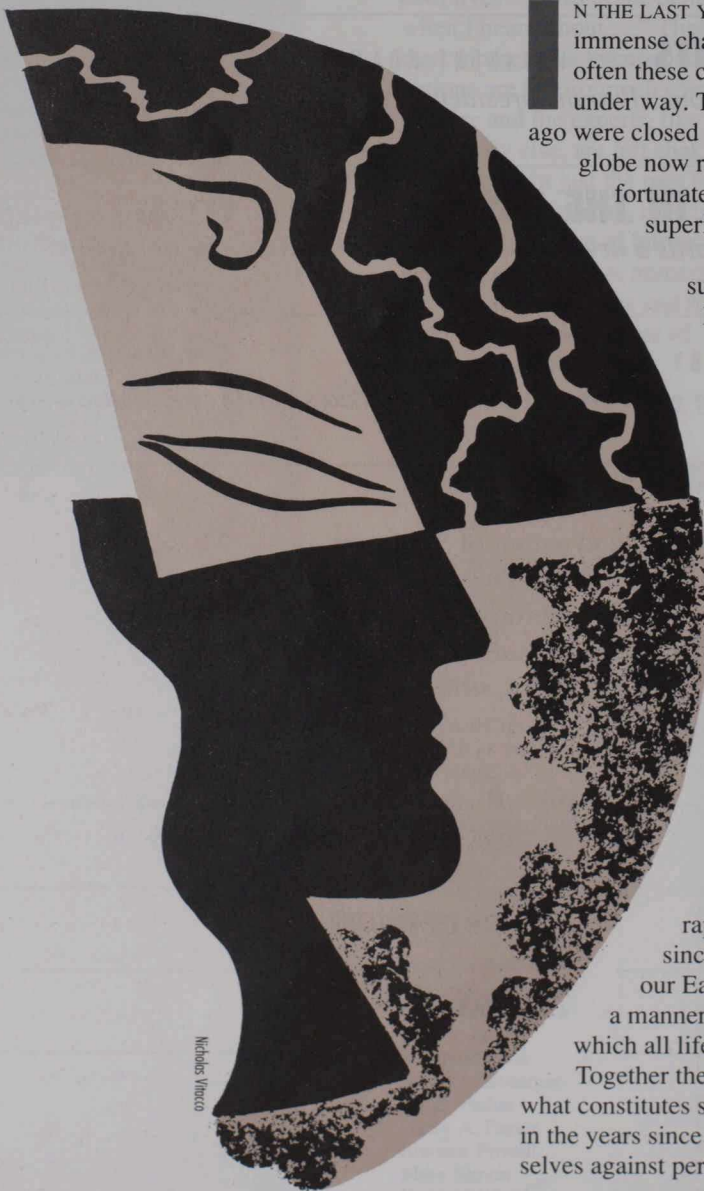
In the late eighties this has brought cataclysmic upheavals to some countries, such as the million-strong public demonstrations for change in Beijing 1989. In Eastern Europe old bonds have been shaken loose with a rapidity that people accustomed to the rigidities of the Cold War still find hard to believe. And in those nations that have long enjoyed the fruits of industry and technology – mostly North America and Europe – old certainties about the inevitability and permanence of progress have been eroded.

There are many reasons for this. Populations are more volatile than ever before. Our world is increasingly polarized between rich and poor. The evidence is accumulating that our globe cannot sustain the present head-long methods of economic development. Even the people who seem to have everything – Canadians among them – have become very uneasy about the future.

What was new in the eighties was that these perceptions of the need for big changes in the way the world was going penetrated to the mass of people – or, at least, became the common currency of political dialogue in nations with widely differing ideologies and systems of government. Leaders almost everywhere now recognize the need for change, and those who do not – the aging leaders who have re-imposed their authority so ruthlessly on China are the perfect symbol – are recognized as social dinosaurs who are heading towards extinction.

Two major influences have produced these changed perceptions: first, the rapid easing of the East-West tensions that have dominated international relations since the end of the Second World War, and second, the growing understanding that our Earth's resources are finite, and human beings are plundering them at a rate and in a manner than cannot be continued without irrevocable damage to the processes on which all life depends.

Together these two influences have led people everywhere to rethink their very notion of what constitutes security. Security has always been a fundamental concern of human groups; and in the years since the Second World War we have poured immense resources into defending ourselves against perceived military threats to our security. In the last few years, however, people



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