

THE CENTRAL ISSUES

Politicians and policy planners need to consider seven major issues as they contemplate making coalitions central to foreign policy, before they commit Canada to any coalition, during the negotiation of coalition terms, and whenever a coalition goes into action.

A Criteria for Association It is essential for policy advisors to develop some criteria aimed at helping leaders determine when Canada will join a coalition, where in the world Canada's interests lie that can be advanced in coalitions, and with whom Canada is willing to associate itself. Although one could argue that the criteria are already established in the context of relationships with the North Atlantic alliance, the United Nations and the United States, the "new world order" and the emergence of coalitions of the moment sponsored by various entities for particular missions suggests, at least, that foreign and defence planners consider and confirm these criteria in these new circumstances.

/ what might generic criteria be? should be re-evaluated regularly.

A National Security Strategy A balance between foreign policy ends and national means was met generally, if not ideally, during most of the Cold War era and for United Nations operations conducted during the same period. Since about 1989, however, the usual bases for coordination and planning have been upset and, arguably, no comprehensive national strategy has replaced the old "strategy of commitments."⁴

here explaining... but tools must be flexible. → what would look like one?

Military planning in the absence of a national security strategy has been complicated by a significant reduction in national defence budgets, the so-called revolution in military affairs, and the fact that old age has rendered much of Canada's defence capabilities obsolete. Chiefs of defence and other military leaders and defence officials have been forced to take decisions on capabilities production in the short and long term without much guidance from governments or coordination with foreign policy goals. For example, should planners prepare the future force according to the directive of *Defence 1994*, "to fight along side the best against the best" – a significant and expensive objective by any estimation – or to support "soft power" humanitarian interventions worldwide in "coalitions of the willing," where the region and "the willing" may be unfamiliar to the Canadian Forces. Even if the choices were not as stark as these (and they are not always so), there are few clear beacons for military planners to follow when making choices about where to direct Canada's long-term defence programme.

b/c things are changing @ very fast pace.

Defence planners, however, are not completely innocent in these circumstances. Quite naturally, military officers and other authorities in the force-development process have their own notions of what kind of armed force Canada needs. They also have their own ideas about why, where and with whom Canada should make coalitions. These ideas and attitudes shape the decisions these individuals take with regard to defence capabilities, the distribution of resources between capabilities and missions, and in the military arrangements and procedures they make with allies.

⁴. Douglas L. Bland, *Chiefs of Defence: Government and the Unified Command of the Canadian Armed Forces* (Toronto: Canadian Institute for Strategic Studies, 1995), pp. 214-24.