

## The Questions in Context: Economics and Security

Canadian trade ministers (as they are paid to do) zealously beat the drum for business. "The Asia-Pacific region is a giant that has stirred," is how one minister put it recently. "Listen to the statistics: by the year 2000, the region will account for 60 per cent of the world's population, 50 per cent of the world's GDP and 40 per cent of global consumption. By 2020, seven of the top 10 economies in the world will be in Asia-Pacific. . . . No company and certainly no nation can afford to absent themselves from this great new economic powerhouse." Since 1983, in fact, Canada has done more two-way trade across the Pacific every year than across the Atlantic. After the United States, five of Canada's next 10 biggest trade partners are Asian (Japan, China, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan).

That is not to say, however, that Canadians own any inevitable share of the booming Asia-Pacific market for trade and investment. In truth, although two-way Canadian trade with the region has been growing, Canada's trade with Asia-Pacific was actually lower in 1996 than in 1989 as a percentage of Canada's total trade with the world. Moreover, Canada's share of the Asia-Pacific market has also declined. These two facts—expanding market, declining Canadian share—help explain the intensity of the "Team Canada" trade-promotion campaigns led by the prime minister; they also give some hint of the dilemmas when the pursuit of "prosperity" conflicts with other Canadian objectives. Promoting trade may not always coincide effortlessly with the promotion of human rights, or with encouraging an orderly regional peace.