

## THEMATIC SUMMARY

As a landmark year in modern history, 1989 will now surely rank with 1789, the year of the French Revolution. The anti-authoritarian revolution that swept Eastern Europe, together with the breaking down of Cold War confrontation, has opened up new hopes for peace and international cooperation. It has also opened up new international opportunities and responsibilities for Canadians.

It is deliberately provocative to ask whether this is the beginning of "peace in our time" – echoing the fateful tones of Neville Chamberlain's self-delusory appeasement. In the year that has marked the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War and the seventy-fifth anniversary of 1914, it is right to face that history squarely. We want to believe that this "peace" is real and enduring, yet millennia of human experience and recent decades of history counsel caution.

Our gaze is rivetted on the drama of Eastern Europe, but we are still aware of wars and threats elsewhere, as well as the brutal setback of reform for one-quarter of humanity in Tienanmen Square. If millions of people are beginning to dare to hope that the recourse to armed conflict among major nations will decline, their hope is tied to the concern that humanity as a whole now faces new security threats, particularly to the Earth's environment and life-support systems. Trade frictions among Western partners could become trading wars among protectionist regional blocs, sapping the ability of these nations to respond to global problems. The improved East-West relationship should allow for greater attention to the festering problems of the Third World, but paradoxically it could lead to even greater neglect.

### **What Can Canada Do About All This?**

This period is much like that of the great re-ordering of the international system which followed the second world war. That era ushered in a "golden age" of Canadian diplomacy and peacekeeping with which this nation made its welcome mark throughout the world, and greatly strengthened its own sense of common purpose in the process.