

Canada needs to reconcile foreign and defence policies

By Alasdair MacLaren

The White Paper *Defence in the Seventies* was the result of the examination and reassessment of Canadian defence policy undertaken during the early years of the Trudeau Government. This document set forth priorities of Canadian defence policy. The first priority was the protection of sovereignty, a not unreasonable first choice; the second was the defence of North America in conjunction with the United States; the third was honouring the NATO commitment: finally, in fourth position, was peacekeeping. From this declaratory policy one might have expected that future procurement decisions would be based largely on the needs of the protection-of-sovereignty role.

In the meantime, however, the development of the so-called "Third Option" in foreign policy pre-empted the shift in defence policy to a more national and less international bearing. This has meant that, rather than implementing the priorities of the 1971 White Paper, defence policy has reverted to what it was in pre-Trudeau days, before the hearing of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, before the partial withdrawal from Europe, and before the development of the principal theme in contemporary Canadian foreign policy.

Properly speaking, defence policy is the servant of foreign policy. It is, nonetheless, unfortunate that the apparent *quid pro quo* for achieving Canadian foreign-policy goals involves the neglect of the first priority of defence policy as laid out in 1971 — the protection of sovereignty. Defence policy has also become the hostage of the notion that any Soviet aggression will come on the central front of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

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To fulfil the NATO commitment conceived requires functionally-spl forces. To fulfil the protection-eighty role, on the other hand, general-purpose, balanced forces means that there can be little of the forces and equipment that has maintained to fulfil the two roles.

Two aspects

There are two principal aspects, environments, of Canadian security: there is internal or domestic security (the question of protecting eighty), which means, in a military sense, the deployment of monitoring and command capabilities, particularly North and now in the 200-mile zone. Conflicts arising in this zone principally of an economic, political nature. The external environment (membership in the Atlantic Alliance) is politico-military character. Activities in this area are primarily in the form of joint operations designed to deter aggression.

In neither environment, it is argued, can Canada act unilaterally; rather it has to enlist the support of others to realize its goals. This is obvious in the case of NATO in the external environment. It may be less obvious in the internal environment, where, for example, the Arctic, the U.S.S.R. is a partner. Not only is the permanent partners different for each of the environments but the situation is further complicated by the position of the United States and Europe *vis-à-vis* Canada. The United States at one and the same time threatens to dominate the North American continent and defends it from aggression. The European Community, on the other hand, is one of the desired counterweights to the United States in the working-out of the Third Option. On the other hand, the European Community is, for the most part, composed of states that are also members of

*Third Option
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defence policy*