

to advance Canadian objectives—prosperity, security, and the projection of Canadian values?

One course might be through institution-building. Canadians participate in the OSCE, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Is there a need for a similar institution in Asia-Pacific? Or are the Asian traditions of discreet bilateralism enough to secure peace and resolve conflicts? Does ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), with its ancillary meetings and groupings, represent a sort of security arrangement in the making? Or do Canada's institution-building interests reflect an old Eurocentrism out of place in Asia?

Another course of Canadian involvement might consist in some redefinition of what concerns us. If the terminology of "human rights" inspires suspicion in Asian government circles, maybe Canadians would get closer to the same ends by speaking and acting in terms of "human security." It's a far-reaching phrase that has already turned up in Canadian ministerial speeches, and directs attention where many think it belongs: not to the security of states and governments, but to the safety and livelihoods of people and communities—their environment, their economic security and freedom from exploitation and persecution, their participation in their own government.

Significantly, it is a concept of comprehensive and holistic security long familiar in Asia. It recognizes non-military threats to security (natural disasters, economic calamity, civil violence). In some Asian countries creating security of this kind is often called building national resilience, an economic, social and political enterprise in which international co-operation is more and more accepted.