

SUMMARY

For the second dramatic year in a row, the world's political system has rocked and shaken on its axis. Even before the Cold War was finally interred, a major new challenge to world order had opened up in the Persian Gulf, and the whole world was scrambling to design and maintain an appropriate response. Meanwhile Canadians, who are the envy of the world for virtually everything except our climate, have somehow managed to turn in upon ourselves and put our own extraordinary country on the world's endangered list.

This second "year of living dangerously" at the global level has revealed how primitive is both our understanding of world order and our institutions for managing it. It is time for Canadians and others to take stock of the state of thinking and action at this historic crossroads of peace, war, law and order. We should also try to outline an agenda of issues that will have to be confronted in winding down the Cold War, in dealing seriously with conflict and arms races outside the East-West arena, and in seeking a more coherent definition and ideal of international and world order.

East-West Relations After the Cold War

The new approach to a post Cold War Europe, ratified in Paris in November, stands a very good chance of limiting the classic dangers of European history in which the inevitable localized conflicts escalate through the intervention of major powers.

At the global level, however, nuclear arsenals remain huge and will, even after a START agreement. Possible destabilizing modernization of weapons is a continuing problem and must be capped. While the present climate of political cooperation exists, the opportunity must be seized for a rapid and massive "build down" of nuclear and conventional weapons, buttressed by strong verification and an "open skies" regime. It is also time to extend arms reductions to the oceans (even if the US Navy resists), and to the Pacific and other regions.

While future instability in the Soviet Union could trigger renewed East-West threats, such a consequence of the break-up of the Soviet Union is not inevitable. Much of what can be done – in arms control