

In the area of human rights, we have more to gain by securing transparent, workable international mechanisms than we have to protect at the national level. Similarly, in the area of arms control, Canada has no security interests which are so compelling that we need to be reticent about highly intrusive verification regimes, including far-reaching confidence-building measures such as Open Skies. As a general principle, our own degree of interdependence, Canada's own openness to the international system (our tradition of "liberal internationalism") has rendered us more sensitive to the need for reconsidering some aspects of sovereignty than are many other countries. We should build upon this absence of ideological inflexibility. Moreover, the down-side of resistance is that we would be cutting against the grain of history at a time of profound and quickening globalization.

7. Conclusion

It would be pointless and futile to argue against the trend towards globalization, harmonization and a more intrusive international order. Moreover, the Canadian interest in human rights, arms control policy, the environment and trade policy argue that we continue to be among the leading countries advocating a more intrusive rule-based international regime, not for its merits as a principle, but for what that principle means in policy areas of interest to Canada. Nor should we fear a more intrusive international order. There will be occasions, in the fields of human rights or the environment, when what we advocate for other states will come back to haunt us. But it would be inconsistent and short-sighted to reverse our long-term policies for short-term gains when the tide of history is against us. Our best defence is consistency. In the human rights area, it means allowing international scrutiny of our record, just as we advocate examination of the records of others. In the environmental area, it means acceptance of principles we advocate for others. In the arms control area, it means openness towards transparent and intrusive verification regimes.

A key concern is that we ensure a fair degree of harmony and consistency in Canada about an intrusive international society and its implications for Canadian interests. Canada is a federal state; many Provincial governments are involved in issues with international implications. Some have limited international experience. A more concerted effort will have to be made by the Federal Government to explain the significance of the evolving nature of the international system and its implications. Similarly, greater efforts will have to be made to bring to the attention of the media, the academic community, non-governmental organizations and other constituencies in Canada how the international system is evolving and how this evolution will bear on Canada in the years ahead.