

SOVEREIGNTY, NON-INTERVENTION
AND THE INTRUSIVE INTERNATIONAL ORDER

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1. Introduction

The evolving nature of sovereignty will remain a key issue of the 1990s. In his speech to Stanford University, 29 September 1991, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney declared Canada in favour of "re-thinking the limits of national sovereignty in a world where problems respect no borders." Similarly, in a recent issue of Foreign Policy, Flora Lewis wrote that "if there is to be a somewhat orderly world, the prerogatives of national sovereignty and the state system will have to be re-examined from crisis to crisis".

This paper looks at the concept of state sovereignty in an era of increased interventionist practices in various policy fields. After examining the concept of sovereignty, various forms of intervention, the debate over non-intervention and current state practice, it argues that:

- (1) the concept of sovereignty is of diminishing importance as the glue which binds the contemporary international system, although its theoretical underpinnings remain largely unchallenged;
- (2) there will be resistance within the United Nations and other multilateral fora to any attempts to diminish the concept of sovereignty in favour of acceptance of more overtly interventionist or intrusive inter-state practices, even if the move to acceptance reflects current realities;
- (3) various forms of interventionism in, inter alia, human rights, the environment and trade policy, has eroded the border between national jurisdiction and the international field, creating a more "intrusive" international system to which national governments must necessarily adapt (and which pose particular problems for federal systems because of the emergent confusion over divisions of powers);
- (4) Canada's interest in an orderly, stable international system argues for a leadership role in accepting and sponsoring the acceptance of new realities, particularly in human rights and arms control, where the objective of achieving greater transparency is virtually synonymous with intrusiveness and where intrusive systems work in favour of stability and the rule of law;
- (5) while recognizing the positive benefits which might accrue from an "intrusive" international system, Canada must seek to manage pragmatically how the current system evolves and to what extent there will be a need to balance

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