
IV. THE PROTECTION OF OUR SECURITY, WITHIN A STABLE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK

Assuring Canada's security remains a fundamental responsibility of government, even as the international context and the security threats it poses have changed. In this new order, the task is much more complex. Canada is ever more affected by what occurs elsewhere in the world. As such, our understanding of the challenges to our security has expanded.

Canadians recognize the vital link between their own security and prosperity and the security of others. Just as Canadians appreciate that prosperity demands the best possible mix of domestic and international economic policies, so too they realize that protecting and enhancing their security and prosperity requires a security policy that promotes peace in every part of the world with which Canada has close economic and political links. For a country with interests as widespread as Canada's, this means that a global approach is needed.

However, the concerns of Canadians about security issues are broader than those of self-interest. The desire to help others to build peace reflects some of the most deeply-held and widely-shared Canadian values. Our security policy must reflect this spirit. Financial constraints do impose choices on us. It is essential, therefore, that we establish clear directions for our security policy.

As the Government's 1994 Defence White Paper pointed out, our memberships in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the North American Aerospace Defence (NORAD) Agreement remain key guarantees of our military security. Though today, direct threats to Canada's territory are diminished, the Government considers it necessary to maintain a military capability appropriate to this still uncertain and evolving international environment. However we are making adjustments within that capability to enhance our ability to contain conflict.

Protecting our security must go beyond military preparedness. New approaches, new instruments, new institutional roles and political responsibilities in the maintenance of international security must be developed. Movement will continue away from security policies and structures based on containment toward new architectures designed to build stability and cooperation. Canada will be at the forefront of those helping to shape a broader framework that responds to the demands of a changing security environment.