

Although it might be useful to examine criteria which could be developed to underpin a doctrine of intervention, seeking formal acceptance of such an approach internationally is likely to be counterproductive. Most governments are highly sensitive to any suggestion that the doctrine of sovereign equality of states should be modified, even in the most extreme cases (such as Iraq). Most far-reaching declarations by like-minded states (for example, the 1991 London Summit Political Declaration) fall short of promoting the creation of new concepts, such as the "right to intervene", which would undermine established precepts.

We would argue that any attempt to redefine sovereignty or introduce new concepts (even if they reflect current realities) is bound to fail and possibly, in so doing, set back interventionist causes which we might favour. It follows that we should focus on securing pragmatic departures from established principles in actual situations, where we can expect to be successful, where international consensus is building and which do not necessarily create precedents. There is no need to hasten the evolution of international law.

Similarly, in the trade policy area, the interaction between domestic and international policies is increasing, and the Canadian interest is in recognizing, adapting and capitalizing on momentum. Competition and innovation policy, the trade and environment interface, the trade and labour/social policy link, and product and process standards are all areas where greater international agreement, regionally and ultimately globally, will be required. Canada should recognize the advantage and desirability of negotiated, transparent and rule-based regimes, and the undesirability of allowing ourselves to fall prey to the imposition of unilateral alternatives.

The Canadian interest is in an international system capable of adjusting peacefully to change. Where crises are beginning to get out of hand, and where the preemptive authority of bilateral contacts or international organizations has yet to have much impact, it is logical that we promote more authoritative and decisive action, even at the price of increased "interventionism". The examples of Yugoslavia and Haiti are appropriate, as the objectives of Canadian action have been to secure international intervention in support of clearly-recognized principles of international law and practice, to prevent further blood-shed, and to support negotiations leading to definitive settlements. More aggressive collective action, perhaps to the point of contemplating intervention forces, should continue to be contemplated to support these objectives, even though care needs to be taken to ensure that interventionist practices do not support unsustainable objectives.

The benefits to Canada which accrue from promoting intrusive international efforts in these areas, in terms of stability, harmony and economic development, far outweigh the disadvantages to particular Canadian interests. Although we may wish to look at the trade-offs in each situation, the vast majority of situations will argue that Canada be in a position of leadership in advocating intrusive action in most fields.