

A Broader Concept of Security

In the first parliamentary review of Canadian foreign policy since the end of the Cold War, the Special Joint Committee Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy reflected on the growing complexity of security: "It is clear that rapidly emerging global problems such as population, poverty, pollution and weapons proliferation constitute growing threats to Canada's security," the committee stated in its November 1994 report, "And these problems are interrelated."¹ Noting that the Cold War focus on military power and risk of war has given way to an understanding of security in keeping with globalization, the committee called for "a broader concept of security." The recommendation was endorsed by the government in its response to the committee three months later. "The Government agrees on the need to adopt a broader concept of security," the document echoed, adding that:

In addition to taking into account traditional military threats, security policy must include recognition of threats to stability, democracy and sustainable development as well as the threats posed by such factors as environmental degradation, overpopulation, involuntary population movements and organized international crime.²

As an indication of its commitment to a new security approach, the government established, within the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, a senior level office for global issues reporting to an assistant deputy minister. The government further developed the concept of *shared human security* and noted that sustainable development was a precondition of, and preventing conflict and peacebuilding were essential goals for, any new security regime.³

These statements demonstrate the degree to which the need for a new security framework has come to be accepted in public thinking and official rhetoric. They acknowledge that the preeminence of "protecting the state" that reached a zenith in Cold War security regimes will often have little meaning today for people threatened by environmental or economic disaster or by military dictatorship. Together with the growing influence of economic globalization, the new security challenges require new, often multilateral, measures. As *Canada in the World* notes, "All of this demands a broadening of the focus of security policy from its narrow orientation of managing state-to-state relationships, to one that recognizes the importance of the individual and society for our shared security."⁴

The growing policy consensus on a wider definition of security has taken shape against a broader backdrop that has introduced several terms that represent variations on a broader view of security. An early term, introduced by the Palme Commission in 1982, was *common security*, which was based on the understanding that lasting security must be shared by all and built by co-operation. Common security was formulated during one of the darkest periods of the Cold War, when it was advocated by the Palme Commission's 1982 report as an alternative to the mutual hostage relationship of nuclear deterrence that represented the core of East-West security relations. Although the focus of the time was on the heightened threat of a nuclear exchange, the Commission's words remain meaningful:

¹ Report of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy, *Canada's Foreign Policy: Principles and Priorities for the Future* (November 1994), 11.

² "Government Response to the Recommendations of the Special Joint Parliamentary Committee Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy" (February 1995), 8.

³ *Canada in the World*, 25.

⁴ *Ibid.*