

CHAPTER I

SOVEREIGNTY IN A CHANGING WORLD

As the dynamics of state relations change, the principles according to which we order these relations will also require adjustment. It is for good reason that our diplomatic language today includes precepts such as confidence-building and common security. Such principles are not evidence of some newfound altruism, but rather bear witness to the fact that we can best stave off catastrophe by coming to grips with the increasingly interdependent nature of our existence. Thus, our understanding of sovereignty, and what we perceive to be the most immediate threats thereto, also demand some rethinking.

A. Toward a Broader Understanding

Sovereignty was defined before the Committee as, "the prevention of trespass, the provision of services and the enforcement of national and international law within (Canadian) territory, waters and airspace."⁽⁶⁾ Both the 1971 and 1987 Defence White Papers emphasized the importance of maintaining sovereignty. The first, taking advantage of a then fairly benign international environment, tended to define sovereignty and the role of the forces in essentially non-military and quasi-military terms, highlighting the importance of matters such as fisheries and environmental protection. The 1987 White Paper, on the other hand, tended to stress the military aspects of sovereignty, emphasizing such issues as maritime coastal defence. Given the challenges of the future, we suspect that a middle ground between these will prove the most appropriate. The Committee thus finds itself in agreement with Martin Shadwick, of the Centre for International and Strategic Studies, in concluding that:

...for the 1990s, we need a hybrid approach that takes into account the non-military, the quasi-military and the military requirements. We have to get an approach that embraces the full spectrum of roles for the future. I think this will increasingly require, down the years, a well-thought-out, flexible and multi-tasked approach to maritime sovereignty.⁽⁷⁾

In making choices for the future, we also need to remember that defence policy equals equipment plus organization. Strategic theorizing and policy declarations will emerge as little more than vacuous platitudes if suitable personnel and equipment are not available, trained and in working order. Because of the time lag in new equipment purchases, operational defence policy can change only over a considerable period of time, making it imperative that we get the logic right before rushing into hardware decisions.

(6) Proceedings, 17:14.

(7) Ibid.