

Criteria for Choosing Policy

How then is the choice to be made?

- First:* The Government could arbitrarily decide that it wants to emphasize specific policy themes like Peace or Independence or the Quality of Life in order to create a certain political image at home and abroad. This choice would be based not on any particular forecast of future events, nor on an assessment of the contribution which specific policy themes would make to the attainment of national aims, but on the pursuit of political philosophy largely in a vacuum. Applied alone, this criterion could easily produce unrealistic results.
- Second:* The Government could base its policy emphasis solely on what Canada's essential needs might be in various situations forecast. This would be largely a matter of deciding which of the policy themes would best serve to attain national aims in such situations. This approach would produce a foreign policy largely reactive to external events, and more often than not to those which posed foreseeable threats to Canadian interests. If this criterion were allowed to dominate, it could be very restrictive on policy choices because forecasts would be more concerned with constraints than opportunities, hampering the Government's initiative and freedom of manoeuvre.
- Third:* Taking some account of forecasts, and especially the very obvious constraints, the Government could seek to emphasize those foreign policy activities which Canada could do best in the light of all the resources available, and under whichever policy theme such action might most appropriately fall.

In practice, these criteria may have to be applied from time to time in some kind of combination. In specific situations this might produce the best balance of judgment. Nevertheless, the Government regards the three criteria as optional approaches to ranking and has selected the third one as a main determinant of its choice of policy emphasis. The Government's preference stems in part from the conclusion that, since forecasting in the field of external affairs is likely to be more reliable in the shorter term, it will be desirable to assign more weight to forecasts when considering relatively short-term programmes rather than when setting the broad lines of policy. The Government is firmly convinced that Canada's most effective contribution to international affairs in future will derive from the judicious application abroad of talents and skills, knowledge and experience, in