

two Canadians now does so. Most indicate that their confidence in the Soviet Union has increased lately.

The respondents were provided a series of characteristics and asked whether each applied more to the Soviet Union or to the United States, to both, or to neither. These were as follows: "wants to dominate the world;" "is willing to negotiate most disputes;" "is trustworthy in negotiations;" "and uses military force to achieve its goals." In each case, the largest group, one representing over 40%, believed that the statement applied equally to both.

The shift in Canadians' perceptions of the superpowers is strikingly evident here. The same set of questions was included in a 1984 poll conducted in

where these actions and motives are concerned. Many more think that the USSR uses military force and seeks domination than so characterize the US, and many more find the US willing to negotiate and trustworthy in negotiations than so find the USSR.

Canadians are yet to be convinced that the USSR is just an ordinary and peaceable power. More than two in every three respondents disagree or disagree strongly with the statement that "the Soviet Union is a peace-loving nation, willing to fight only if it thinks it has to defend itself." Nor is a European conflict unimaginable. Most (60%) disagree that a conventional war in Europe is now impossible. The rest (40%) agree it is impossible, but only a handful (5%) agree strongly.

Despite Gorbachev and despite the fact that in over forty years they have not attacked the West, the Soviets, to use the colloquial, are not entirely out of the Cold War woods yet. As a result, Canadians still support the traditional policies designed to meet this conventional military threat. Only a small minority (16%) do not regard Canada's participation in NATO as important. (Fully 90% claim to have heard of the alliance organization.) More significantly, support for maintaining Canadian forces in Europe is high, and there has been no decline in this support since 1987 when this question was last asked on the Institute for Peace and Security poll. About one in every four respondents argues that Canadian forces should be reduced or withdrawn; three in four support their being kept at present levels, or increased.

When asked whether these troops ought to be reduced in the event of an East-West agreement to reduce, significantly, conventional military forces in Europe, fully 40% say the Canadian force levels ought still to be maintained. (The wording noted but did not emphasize the point, argued by military experts, that substantial reductions in the numbers of Canadian soldiers might leave these units ineffective militarily.) About one-third (35%) favour reducing Canadian troops by the same proportion as the overall reductions, while one-quarter (24%) opted for complete withdrawal.

Moreover, Canadians are still willing to defend Europe if necessary. Almost six in ten (58%) say that the use of Canadian troops would be justified in the event of an invasion of Western Europe. Canadians seem to be defence policy traditionalists in another sense. They are skeptical about some of the newer ideas regarding defence policy such as "non-provocative" defence or "defensive-defence." These ideas, now very much debated in Europe, were described to respondents as aiming "to get rid of weapons that could be used to attack the other side and rely only on non-threatening weapons." About one in three (33%) thought the idea made sense; the rest (67%) thought it impossible to have weapons for defensive purposes only.

Figure 2: Importance of International Problems Index (Max 100)

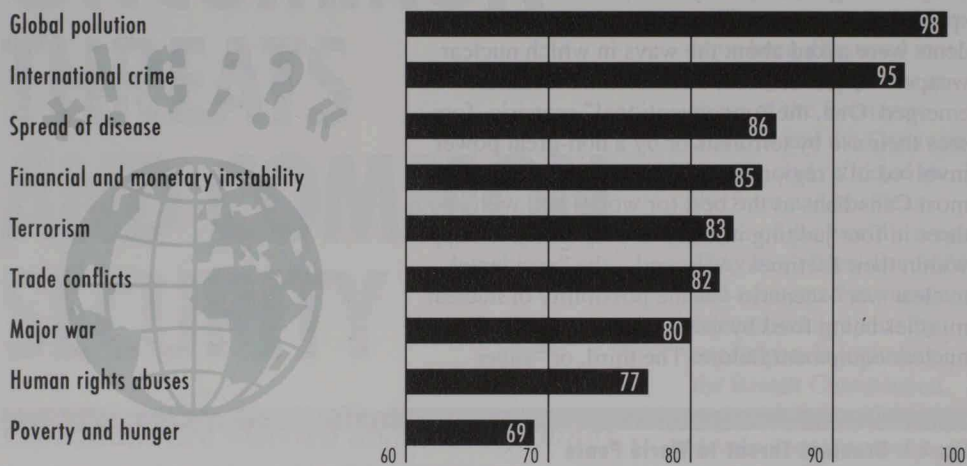
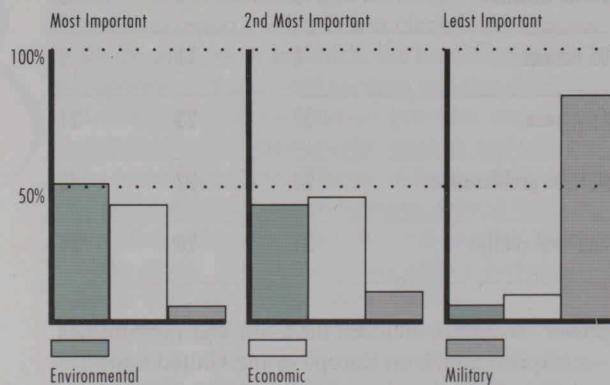


Figure 3: Three Types of Threat



Canada by the United States Information Agency. At that time, only half as many respondents, fewer than one in four, thought that both the US and USSR were equally willing to negotiate or were trustworthy in negotiations. And significantly fewer similarly evaluated them as seeking world domination or using military force.

DESPITE THE TREND AWAY FROM BLACK-WHITE COLD War images of the two superpowers, documented in previous Institute polls, Canadians do not regard the two superpowers as completely equivalent, at least