

encouraging the adaptation of their national economies to the new realities of the global economic marketplace, in part through supporting a political environment which favors the globalization of industry. Political speeches focus on the lack of alternatives; since globalization cannot be ignored, its opportunities cannot therefore be missed. "Competitiveness", "efficiency", "liberalization", the "minimalist state" have become the mantra of this new political climate.

Similarly, the end of the Cold War appeared to herald a new era of "human security." Again, to quote Lloyd Axworthy, human security "includes security against economic privation, an acceptable quality of life, and a guarantee of fundamental human rights", and encompasses "the rule of law, good governance, sustainable development and social equity."<sup>3</sup> The concept of human security transcends the traditional statist understanding of national and international security, and is focussed on "the individual, alone or in collectives, as the object of security; the entity to be secured as opposed to the state."<sup>4</sup> In practice, however, substantive change has fallen far short of this ideal. In the first instance, states are simply unwilling to commit the resources necessary to bring this ideal to fruition. More broadly, however, the very forces of globalization which are seen to be inexorable and inevitable are in fact exacerbating the sources of insecurity which the ideal of human security is supposed to address.

Therefore, while Canadian foreign policy continues to be marked by internationalist flourishes, such as the campaign to ban landmines and participation in NATO's "humanitarian intervention" in the Kosovo War and air strikes on Yugoslavia, such intermittent and well-intentioned initiatives generally fail to address the underlying structural forces which underpin so much of the injustice and insecurity in contemporary world affairs.

While it may be useful to trace a sketch of the processes of globalization, what is crucial to understand is that these processes have a profound impact on the definition, or construction, of the possibilities for Canadian intervention, or commitment. Our argument here is that in highlighting the inevitability of restructuring, globalization, at least in its economic manifestations, is painted as a set of processes which are beyond the realm of politics. Globalization does not appear to be about politics. Even though wholesale economic restructuring takes place within a regulatory context defined by economic liberalization (a context which is fundamentally shaped by political choices and political action), the outcome and exigencies of this restructuring are portrayed as being beyond the realm of political intervention. Globalization is ironically an economic reality to which states must react, but the nature of that (political) reaction is not to be understood as a subject of political debate. Few choices are seen to be open to us, and only intermittent commitments can be made.

The challenge, then, is to identify ways and means to recapture a sense of *choice* and *agency*: the

---

<sup>3</sup>Lloyd Axworthy, "Canada and Human Security: The Need for Leadership," *International Journal* 53, 2 (Spring 1997), 84.

<sup>4</sup>J. Marshall Beier and Ann Denholm Crosby, "Harnessing Change for Continuity: The Play of Political and Economic Forces Behind the Ottawa Process," *Canadian Foreign Policy* 5, 3 (Spring 1998), 86.