

## I Cooperative Security

The Canadian initiative to explore the merits of establishing a North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue (NPCSD) is based on the concept of "cooperative security"; specifically, it seeks to examine how the global post-Cold War security environment could most effectively contribute to improved relations among the seven countries of the North Pacific.

In the Canadian definition, security is more than the absence of war; it is the presence of a stable and prosperous peace. It is now conventional wisdom that security can no longer be achieved unilaterally or attained exclusively through military means. Security has become multi-dimensional - some would say "multiplex"<sup>1</sup> - and requires a shared commitment on all sides to work cooperatively towards building trust and confidence.

The application of the concept of cooperative security to the North Pacific is not suggested as an alternative to traditional security arrangements (collective and mutual defence arrangements will remain central to the preservation of national sovereignty); rather, it is intended first to address all issues of concern and then to focus on those areas where it is agreed that progress in developing multilateral approaches is possible.

While no one can or should deny the continuing importance of traditional security issues and approaches, there is a growing recognition that security can no longer be defined only in those terms. Challenges to security and stability increasingly come in more diverse forms including, *inter alia*, economic underdevelopment, trade disputes, overpopulation, irregular migration and refugee movements, environmental degradation, political oppression, human rights abuses, terrorism and the illicit trade in drugs.

Cooperative security takes as its point of departure the fact that security is both complex and indivisible. That is, no one state can "be secure" either at the expense of, or in isolation from, others. Cooperative security is the development of working relationships and functional links across a broad spectrum of issues (political, economic and social) at all levels of interaction (official and unofficial) through regular and systematic dialogue which will permit and promote transparency, confidence, knowledge and reassurance. Cooperative security seeks to develop the habit of dialogue through discussion, negotiation, cooperation and compromise.

The approach to cooperative security cannot realistically be guided by a grand strategic design, but is constructed by putting into place many different instruments which, although arrived at separately, contribute to cooperative security. It is by definition evolutionary in nature and regional (or sub-regional) in approach. Individual states may reject multilateral approaches to specific issues as contrary to their national interests; others may reject any effort at all to construct a more cooperative international order. However, a cooperative security dialogue means that one can build on what is realistic and possible. Obviously, military confidence will continue to play a central role in a cooperative security