Canada’s World Regional Dialogue

Conflict is Changing

Canada struggles to define its military and peacekeeping role in a world where conflict is changing.
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INTRODUCTION

The pages of our newspapers seem covered with news of the latest disaster: war, terrorist bombings, nuclear weapons’ tests, hostage takings, assassinations, and genocide. Despite this seemingly endless bloodshed, the 2006 Human Security Report\(^1\) indicates that conflict has been slowing since 1994. Despite the escalating violence in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chad, and Darfur, the number of armed conflicts being waged around the world shrank by 15% between 2005 and 2006, from 66 to 56. This is good news.

Yet while reported cases of armed conflict may be on the decline, threats to peace and security are shifting and becoming less predictable. Terrorism is on the rise and disturbing trends — some old, some new — are contributing to a challenging security environment. These include:

- The possibility that non-state actors could secure and use nuclear and or biological weapons against targets in Canada and abroad;
- The difficulty of keeping Canada’s borders, long undefended, closed to terrorists but open to trade;
- The challenge Canada’s military faces as it is called upon to not only keep the peace between clearly defined opponents, but also to battle insurgents who are difficult to tell apart from civilians;
- The lack of international will and capacity to deal effectively with genocide; and
- The melting of the ice cap and the consequent challenges to Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

While dealing with security issues is not new for Canada\(^2\), the nature and scope of the risks posed by international phenomena such as terrorism, pandemics, climate change, and resource scarcity require new thinking and fresh approaches.

How should Canada respond to these threats? And what do Canadians need to do, domestically and internationally, to position Canada so that it can best address the changing nature of conflict? What values, interests and assets does Canada have that will provide greater peace and security both at home and abroad?

This discussion guide explores the changing nature of conflict, Canada’s historic and current policies, and some possible approaches for moving forward. This information is provided as a starting point for your deliberations. It is not comprehensive, but does outline many of the biggest challenges that
Canada faces. As you read this, think about different perspectives, identify new questions, and consider new ways in which you might want Canada to address peace and security in a world where conflict is changing.
BACKGROUND

In the summer of 1944 representatives from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the USSR, and China gathered in Washington D.C. to discuss the creation of a new international, multilateral institution designed to prevent future wars between major world powers. Against the backdrop of two of history’s most destructive wars, World War I and World War II, global leaders sought to replace the world’s old, ineffective international institutions with new ones. The product of the conference, the United Nations, became the world’s main international organization, with near-universal membership and peacekeeping operations around the world.

In the Cold War that followed WWII, the US and the USSR competed for power while their nuclear weapons made them reluctant to have a direct confrontation (this reluctance is often called the ‘deterrent’ effect of nuclear weapons). Conflict in the Cold War shifted away from the developed world and toward so-called satellite states — Nicaragua, Vietnam, Korea, Angola, Afghanistan. *Intrastate* and *transnational* conflict, or wars within the borders of a single state and across multiple states, became more common in the 1950s and continued through the 20th century. Millions died. UN peacekeeping missions, once largely a matter of putting a peacekeeping force in between two adversaries, turned into increasingly complicated affairs as the line between soldier and civilian blurred. Genocides, failed states, and intrastate conflicts in the developing world also became common. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1989, many of these ongoing satellite conflicts became ‘orphaned,’ with the former great powers pulling out their armies and money. And though the 1980s and 1990s saw less conflict than previous decades, at its close the 20th century was one of the most destructive on record.

1. INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND NON-STATE ACTORS

Since the UN’s founding in 1946, there have been almost no major conflicts between industrialized nations; however, a new host of threats now occupy the international security agenda. 9/11 highlighted, perhaps more than any other event since 1989, the power of transnational groups. Organized without the open support of any nation, the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 killed nearly 3,000 people, contributed to a world-wide economic downturn, and radically altered political landscapes in the US and abroad.
Though terrorist groups such as Al’Qaeda and acts like 9/11 are not new — Israel, Lebanon, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Spain, Nepal, and others have dealt with modern terrorism for decades — they are now getting more attention. Securing ports, airports, and borders is a major concern (and issue of debate) in many countries, particularly those that participated in the US-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, Canada included. Non-state actors in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Asia vying to either control the state or disrupt it have displaced communities and led to the deaths of thousands, beginning as early as the 1950s. Canada’s current mission in southern Afghanistan, where Canadian Armed Forces are locked in a struggle with Taliban forces and other insurgents for control of the area, faces this reality.

9/11 has also highlighted the vulnerability of states and their limited ability to respond to non-state-based threats. The “War on Terror,” as it has been called by the US, is one such response. At home, it has meant stricter border security, tighter immigration policies, and increased domestic policing.

Abroad it has meant wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and international coalitions aimed at disabling terrorist groups by freezing their financial assets, arresting terrorism suspects, and monitoring the movement of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. So-called “rogue states” such as Iraq, Iran, North Korea, and Syria have also been put under increased scrutiny by the international community, primarily over their nuclear programmes and arms trafficking.

International institutions have also been challenged by new threats. The 2003 invasion of Iraq, begun by a ‘Coalition of the Willing’ without official authorization from the United Nations Security Council, is one such challenge. Instead of relying primarily on the UN, the US and its allies have assembled new ad-hoc multilateral initiatives in their response to terrorism, including the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Iraq coalition, and new bilateral security partnerships with Pakistan, India, Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines, and others.

These responses are viewed both positively and negatively. Some argue that these new arrangements allow countries under threat (e.g. the US after 9/11) to act swiftly and decisively. Critics have pointed to their ineffectiveness in terms of combating terrorism and the negative effects of their implementation, especially on civilian populations.

The United States has come under particular international scrutiny for a range of actions that undermine international law — its treatment of detainees at Guantanamo Bay, its use of CIA interrogation bases abroad, its transfer of prisoners (like Maher Arar) to countries like Syria that practice torture, and its use of landmines in
countries like Afghanistan. The US administration has responded to criticism by arguing that its actions are essential to homeland security and winning the global “war on terror.”

2. Transnational and Intrastate Conflict

Looking beyond terrorism, the international community’s ability to respond to conflict happening inside and across states — transnational and intrastate conflict — is also mixed, and some of its tools controversial. Ongoing violence in the Sudan, Somalia, Northern Uganda, and parts of Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, (more recently Kenya) and elsewhere kill thousands each year. Genocides in Rwanda, Darfur, and the former Yugoslavia were not prevented by the existing UN intervention apparatus. In order for the UN to intervene, the United Nations Security Council must rule, under Chapter VII of its Constitution, that the circumstances of the conflict justify foreign intervention and the violation of a country’s national sovereignty.

As is the case in many conflicts, traditional ‘sovereignty’ and the legitimacy of a government may be difficult to determine. Governments of such ‘failed states’ cannot control their borders, or in some cases are the primary agents of violence themselves. One response to Chapter VII’s limitations in these cases is the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), a document that proposes that the international community must intervene if a state cannot or will not respond to domestic incidences of genocide or mass murder. Another response has been international focus on a ‘human security agenda’ that emphasizes the security of individuals, rather than states, and often includes issues not often discussed in conventional security dialogues (e.g., access to food, water, and shelter, human rights, the rule of law, and political rights and freedoms). Both R2P and the human security agenda have

**Charter of the United Nations – Chapter VII**

Action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression

**Article 39:** The Security Council (SC) shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken [...] to maintain or restore international peace and security.

**Article 41:** The SC may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions. [...] These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.

**Article 42:** Should the SC consider [these measures] inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore inter-national peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations.

**Article 51:** Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations...

http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/chapter7.htm
raised concerns that each advocate the violation of state sovereignty or might further entangle foreign peacekeepers and troops in domestic crises with no clear solutions.

**The Responsibility to Protect (R2P)** doctrine outlines that sovereign states have a responsibility to protect their own citizens from avoidable catastrophe, but when they are unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of states.

“The Responsibility to Protect”. http://www.iciss.ca

Complicating these agendas is the changing nature of conflict on the ground. Peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations have become multidimensional. Beginning in the 1950s, the division between enemy combatant and civilian narrowed — and in some conflicts it no longer exists at all. Difficulties distinguishing between civilian and enemy, establishing a ceasefire, and getting clear consent from authorities have complicated humanitarian interventions and peacekeeping operations in Somalia, Bosnia, Sudan, and Afghanistan. The era of ‘first-generation’ peacekeeping — which involved placing peacekeepers between two sides to prevent them from coming to blows (e.g., Canadian peacekeepers in Cyprus) — seems out of date.

Today, interventions abroad are now largely embroiled in either second-generation peacekeeping operations, where opposing sides are not clearly defined, consent is questionable, and the security environment is markedly more hostile, as was the case in Somalia, Bosnia, and others, or in a yet-to-be-defined amalgam of peacekeeping, policing, international development, diplomacy, counterinsurgency, and open conflict, as is the case in southern Afghanistan. This is sometimes termed ‘peacebuilding’ because the ‘peace’ has yet to be established.

In response to the changing nature of peacekeeping, governments including Canada’s have initiated ‘3D’ or ‘whole-of-government’ peacebuilding approaches that coordinate defence, development, and diplomatic personnel in an effort to create a sustainable security environment. Under 3D, physical security is prioritized alongside economic development, education, access to basic needs, the development of infrastructure, and the transfer of security responsibility to local authorities.

**3. Nuclear proliferation**

International efforts to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have also faced many challenges since World War II,
particularly as states such as Libya, South Africa, Pakistan, India, Brazil, Argentina, North Korea, Iraq, Syria, Iran, and others sought to bolster their nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons stockpiles and delivery capabilities. The international proliferation regime, made up of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and a host of other multilateral treaties targeting specific aspects of nuclear proliferation, have had limited success preventing new states from developing nuclear arms. Under the terms of the NPT, China, the US, the UK, France, and Russia — the five nuclear powers — promise to share nuclear technology for peaceful energy production with the non-nuclear-weapon states, as well as work toward general disarmament. States not possessing nuclear weapons are for their part required to submit to regular International Atomic Energy Inspections as set out by the IAEA safeguards agreement. Under this regime, many states once pursuing nuclear weapons programmes have since abandoned them and submitted to IAEA inspections under NPT, including Brazil, South Africa, Libya, and Argentina, among others.

Several states have developed significant nuclear weapons capability despite the NPT. India and Pakistan never signed the treaty, and the former first tested a nuclear arm in 1974. Pakistan followed suit in the 1980s. Today, Pakistan and India collectively possess hundreds of nuclear arms and thousands of missiles that can deliver them. Israel, also a non-signatory, is believed to possess nuclear weapons, though it has never made this information public. In April 2003 North Korea became the first state ever to withdraw from the NPT; by October 2006 it had tested a small nuclear device. The regime is thought to have as many as a dozen working, if basic, warheads. Iran, Iraq, and Syria, all signatories to the NPT, have attracted increasing international attention over their attempts to build civilian nuclear programmes that could potentially produce weapons. The US used the possession of ‘weapons of mass destruction’ to justify its invasion of Iraq, although this was later disproved. Iran now faces United Nations Security Council sanctions in response to its nuclear programme, though the Iranian leadership insists its nuclear ambitions are civilian-only. The possibility that any of these regimes collapse, lose control of their arsenals, or sell nuclear equipment to terrorist groups or other states — especially impoverished North Korea and unstable Pakistan — has become an increasingly pressing issue since 9/11.
The changing security environment is of direct relevance to Canadians, not the least because of our mission in Afghanistan. The Toronto arrests in June 2006 of several young men suspected of plotting terrorist activities demonstrated that even a country with a ‘dovish’ international reputation is fair game for terrorist cells. Pandemics, nuclear proliferation, and the possibly of interstate and intrastate conflict continue to be issues of paramount international concern to Canadians and others alike.

Canada has a history of adapting to new and emerging threats to the security environment — such as our ‘invention’ of peacekeeping and the human security agenda — and making substantial commitments to maintaining traditional, state-to-state peace through collective security. The following is a summary of those commitments.

1. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CANADA’S MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

Canada has a distinguished military history. With limited foreign policy independence until the 1931 Statute of Westminster, Canada did nonetheless participate with the Commonwealth in the Second Boer War and again in the First World War. It was through the victories at Vimy Ridge in northern France and elsewhere that Canadian soldiers earned a reputation as a formidable force independent of Britain. In September 1939 Canada responded to Hitler’s aggressions by declaring war on Germany one week after Britain and France. With a limited air force, Canada made a small but significant contribution in the Battle of Britain, and the Royal Canadian Navy with the Canadian merchant marine played a crucial role in the Battle of the Atlantic.

In 1951, Canada formed part of the British Commonwealth Forces in Korea. Although some have called this “Canada’s Forgotten War,” 26,791 Canadian troops were sent to Korea and 1,588 of them were casualties. Since 1949, more than 125,000 Canadians have participated in UN peacekeeping operations. These have included operations in Cyprus and observer missions in the Sinai and Golan Heights, Ethiopia-Eritrea, East Timor, Bosnia, Somalia, and Rwanda. More recently Canada has participated with allied forces in the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991), Bosnia (1995-1998), Kosovo (1999), Afghanistan as part of the Operation Enduring Freedom (October 2001), and again as part of the UN-sanctioned NATO force in Afghanistan.
(February 2003 to the present).

2. CANADA’S CONTRIBUTION TO DISARMAMENT

Canada has also made significant contributions to addressing conflict in non-militaristic terms. From the post-WWII years to the end of the Cold War, Canada played an active role in advocating for the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. Between 1948 and 1957, Canada was a member of two successive United Nations commissions on eliminating or controlling nuclear arms. In 1968, Canada joined the United States, Soviet Union, Britain, France, and China and signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Canada has also been involved in other non-proliferation initiatives, including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which aims to limit nuclear weapons testing (ratified in 1996). The Canadian government advocated internationally for the negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty to prohibit the production of nuclear material used in nuclear weapons. Canada has also participated in informal non-proliferation arrangements such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which seeks to prevent the international transport of banned WMD and WMD technology, and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which monitors nuclear material supplies around the world.

3. CANADA AND THE HUMAN SECURITY AGENDA

Canada’s foreign policy has historically included a range of non-military policies as part of its overall security policy. Recently, foreign policy experts and politicians, notably the former Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy, have advanced the concept of human security. According to this view, military approaches are important but not sufficient to ensure security for citizens.

Canada has played a lead role in advancing a human security agenda

**HUMAN SECURITY** focuses on protecting individuals and communities from threats associated with civil war, genocide, famine, natural disasters or the displacement of populations. It moves beyond a traditional national security focus of defending the state from external attack to focusing on the individuals. “Protecting citizens from foreign attack may be a necessary condition for the security of individuals, but it is not a sufficient one. Indeed, during the last 100 years far more people have been killed by their own governments than by foreign armies.”

Proponents of human security may ascribe to a ‘narrow’ concept of human security, which focuses on violent threats to individuals, or a ‘broad’ concept, which recognizes that threats such as hunger, disease and natural disasters must also be considered as they kill far more people than war, genocide and terrorism combined.

“What is Human Security?” [http://www.humansecurityreport.info/content](http://www.humansecurityreport.info/content)
internationally. Working in conjunction with other governments, multilateral institutions, private sector actors, and civil society organizations, Canada has used its ‘soft-power’ skills of negotiation, coalition building, dialogue, and diplomatic influence to initiate and support a number of human-security oriented global initiatives:

• In 1997, Canada led a process that created the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, more commonly known as the Landmines Treaty or the Ottawa Treaty.
• Canada convened the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty to explore when, if ever, it is appropriate for states to intervene militarily against another state for the purposes of protecting the population from catastrophe. This report led the creation of The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) report in 2001.
• In the late 1990s, Canada played a lead role in developing and ratifying the Rome Statute, which established an International Criminal Court with jurisdiction over genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.
• Canada has also played a role in addressing the plight of child soldiers, the effects of small arms trade on development, and the trafficking of diamonds that fund conflicts — ‘blood diamonds’ — in Africa.

4. CANADA AND THE WAR ON TERROR

Though Canada did not commit troops to Iraq in 2003, preferring instead to wait for UN authorization, it has been deeply involved in the US ‘War on Terror’ and US counterterrorism initiatives abroad since 9/11. Canadian personnel and hardware played a support role in the invasion of Iraq and post-war construction, helping train police officers, write Iraq’s constitution, and provide the US military with logistical support. Canada has made a major troop commitment to Afghanistan under several International Security Assistance Force missions, the latest of which involves some 2,500 troops stationed in the southern province of Kandahar. Canadian-US defence cooperation on border security and port security has also become more integrated post-9/11. Canada participates in US continental defence through NORAD, including a passive role in ballistic missile defence systems. In 2006 NORAD was expanded to include joint US-Canada Maritime defence. Canada also indicated it will uphold United Nations Security Council sanctions against Iran and North Korea over their nuclear programmes, and has helped the US track down and identify sources of terrorism funding.
A CRITICAL LOOK AT CANADA’S CONTRIBUTION AND POSITIONS

While Canada has many reasons to be proud of its contributions to promoting international peace and security, there are shortcomings and inconsistencies in our policies that deserve further exploration.

In the past few decades, some have expressed concern about the growing gap between Canada’s commitments abroad and our ability to keep these commitments. From 1988 to 1997, Canada’s military expenditures dropped from US$12.7 billion to US$8.8 billion. While this figure has grown under recent injections to the Department of Defence budget ($13 billion in 2004 and an additional boost of $12.8 billion over five years, announced by Stephen Harper) some critics believe it is not high enough. Experts such as Douglas Bland argue that the Canadian Forces could face extinction if the government does not get serious about increasing military expenditures. This argument is reinforced by academics and defence experts, such as J.L. Granatstein, who maintain that Canadian security begins with understanding what constitutes Canada’s true national interests (as opposed to its ‘values’), and the role the military should play in promoting and protecting them. Military historian David Bercuson argues that Canada needs to restore its ‘hard power’ — and that this calls for more military hardware and personnel.

But while some argue that Canada needs a stronger, better-resourced military, others say that Canada has been successful in converting “its meager 1.5 percent share of major power military expenditures in 1995 into its desired outcomes rather well”. As John Kirton notes, “one can spend a lot and still lose the war, as the US learned in Vietnam and the Soviets in Afghanistan... Canada has sent its own forces around the world — to fight as well as to ‘peacekeep’ — on many occasions. By these outcome-oriented performance criteria, Canada’s military capability has been enough to fight and win.”

But is Canada’s current commitment to peacekeeping strong? While many Canadians cling to the image of Canada as a celebrated peacekeeper, our vision of ourselves may not fit well with reality. In December 2007, Canada had 164 people involved in UN peacekeeping forces (which includes police, mission observers, and troops), placing 58th in the...
ranking of the list of contributors. Reduction in peacekeeping forces has been a general trend among European countries, but whereas the UK and France still commit troops to Africa, Canada has a much more limited geographic spread.\textsuperscript{14}

This stands in sharp contrast to April 1993, when about 3,300 Canadians were involved in a number of large UN missions abroad, including UNPROFOR in Bosnia and UNTAC in Cambodia. As Walter Dorn notes, “Canada provided 10 percent of the UN’s forces. Currently it provides only 0.1 percent” — a hundred-fold decline.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1948, Canada ratified the Genocide Convention, which defines genocide as acts committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. By ratifying that convention, Canadians confirmed that genocide, whether committed in a time of peace or in a time of war, is a crime under international law that should be prevented. Despite these UN commitments, between 1992 and 1995, 250,000 people were killed during the genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 1993, Canada’s own UN Force Commander Romeo Dallaire pleaded with the international community for more assistance in Rwanda, to no avail. In 1994, some 800,000 people were slaughtered in a matter of weeks in the East African country. Ongoing killings in Darfur, though smaller in scale and now receiving substantial international attention, echo the Rwandan genocide.

For many reasons, the R2P doctrine and the Genocide Convention have not gained universal support. Although many governments recognize the existence of atrocities in countries like Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Sudan, they are reluctant to commit troops for a number of reasons, not the least of which is a reluctance to see their country’s sons and daughters killed in conflicts that seem impossible to solve or do not appear to have a direct relation to their lives.

This criticism has certainly been raised in Afghanistan. Although Canada sent troops to Afghanistan in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001 (and later as part of a UN-mandated security operation), the mission does not have strong majority support among Canadians. Those opposed think that fighting a war against the Taliban in southern Afghanistan is not essential to Canada’s national security, that it is not an effective way to deal with the problem of terrorism, or that it has stretched Canadian resources too thin, preventing us from making substantive commitments elsewhere.

Canada has also taken a backseat in recent non-proliferation initiatives, perhaps a sign of its waning influence abroad and a change in approach in Washington to non-proliferation issues. Though Canada participates in the Proliferation Security Initiative, the
IAEA, NPT, and the Nuclear Suppliers Group in London, it has played virtually no role in recent non-proliferation negotiations surrounding Iran and North Korea. Canada has remained silent on the controversial issue of ballistic missile defence since declining an increased role in a proposed North American defence system in 2004. Other US allies, such as Japan and countries in Western Europe, have moved ahead with BMD systems — meanwhile Russia has taken an increasingly aggressive nuclear posture against the West. Canada has also faced criticism over its sales of uranium, plutonium, and nuclear technologies to states that later used these transactions to increase their nuclear arsenals.
Given the changing nature of conflict, the shortcomings and inconsistencies in Canadian peace and security policy, and the presence of new and emerging threats, what should Canada do? Deciding how best to proceed is not about finding the correct technical solution — your decisions will reflect your beliefs, values, and assumptions.

In the final section of this discussion guide, three broad approaches are presented as a starting point for your deliberations on what actions you think Canadians should consider in addressing the issue of international peace and security. In addition to a brief overview, we have provided two series of arguments -- in favour and against each approach -- to help you consider different perspectives.

These approaches are not comprehensive, definitive, or mutually exclusive. They are meant to stimulate your thinking about the most important steps to take, the choices you are prepared to commit to, and why. You are not being asked to pick one approach. Rather, we invite you to use these approaches as a starting point for considering other options or combinations of approaches.
Canada’s interests are best served through traditional security alliances — such as NATO and NORAD — and not through holistic commitments to multilateralism, human security, and universal peace initiatives. Canada’s traditional partners share similar security situations, cultural and political norms, and foreign policies. By working with like-minded nations and avoiding reliance on decentralized, multilateral engagements that require significant international cooperation, Canada can better focus its conflict and security operations. Recognizing the increasing inability of existing multilateral institutions to respond to new threats at home and abroad, Canada would shift its defence and foreign policy away from broad multilateralism and toward alliance-based coalitions. Alliance-based security and operations are flexible and involve committed and trusted partners, with clear end goals.

Key actions would include strengthening Canada’s security alliance with the US through NORAD; missile defence; port, maritime, and border security; counterterrorism initiatives; and maintaining a firm commitment to NATO. Canada would, however, avoid becoming entangled in UN operations that do not have a clear benefit to Canadian security, and pursue multilateral operations abroad only when the mandate is clear and they receive strong support from Canada’s traditional allies.
ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

☑ Today’s security threats are fast-moving, international, and put Canada at risk. Multilateral institutional responses (e.g., the UN) are simply too slow and complex to deal with new challenges to security and the changing nature of conflict. Canada needs to concentrate on key trusted partners and allies who can move quickly to address the changing security environment.

☑ The UN record on conflict and security initiatives abroad is mixed in part because of weak commitment from other nations. Working with traditional partners and allies reduces these commitment problems and minimizes ‘mixed motives.’

☑ Canada’s current abilities do not match its commitments. By narrowing our commitments to emphasize traditional security alliances, Canada would be better able to fulfill its current peacebuilding commitments and contribute to future ones.

☑ Canada must be able to defend its fragile borders, especially the Arctic, from security threats. With this approach, Canada’s military would be better able to protect its borders and sea passages because of its strong alliance with the US and defence cooperation with its allies.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

☒ Canada is weak, militarily, in comparison to many of its traditional allies, particularly the US. Canada may be too small to fund a significant military force that can engage in substantial operations at home or abroad.

☒ Canadians may be opposed to an approach so focused on traditional alliances, particularly given other commitments to multilateralism, international institutions, and peacekeeping.

☒ Canada’s traditional alliances necessarily include the US. Canada could risk its reputation internationally by tying its actions too closely to the US, which has of late pursued many unilateral security goals. If Canada had followed the US into Iraq, for example, we would likely now face high military costs and reduced international respect.

☒ Commitment to our allies might mean we become further involved in traditional conflicts and lack the resources to adapt to new threats, particularly those coming from non-state actors. Canada would be better to focus its efforts on re-training its military so that it can address the changing security environment.

QUESTIONS

1. As global power shifts and becomes less certain, is it in Canada’s interest to focus on traditional military alliances rooted in old realities? Are organizations like NATO and NORAD still relevant?

2. Does this traditional approach address the real sources of conflict? Are there other non-military methods of addressing some root causes of conflict, such as poverty and inequality?

3. Does this approach take us too far away from what Canadians see as their position in the world?

4. Does peacekeeping fit within this approach, and if so, how?
**Approach 2**

**Emphasize Our Commitment to Multilateralism, International Cooperation, and the Rule of International Law**

Canada would emphasize its moral authority, playing a lead role in establishing new international treaties and initiatives (such as R2P, the International Criminal Court, and the Human Security Agenda), and focus on peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations abroad. Under this approach, the establishment of universal international norms through the UN and elsewhere is vital to international security — and a key element of Canada’s philosophy on creating a more secure global environment. This approach builds on Canada’s international stance as a Middle Power: unable to commit the personnel or hardware of a larger nation, but capable of playing a lead role in more focussed, or ‘niche,’ settings, Canada would concentrate “resources in specific areas best able to generate returns worth having, rather than trying to cover the field”⁶⁶.

Key actions would include a continued focus on establishing universal international peace and security; promoting international cooperation, contributing to international development, and making a robust commitment to multilateral peacekeeping. Canada would restructure its military so that it is better suited for peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, not continental defence or ‘major power’ conventional engagements. This would mean that Canada would develop and train its forces to uphold the R2P doctrine, among others. Canada would also increase its presence in the UN and push its allies to adopt R2P, the ICC, and other international multilateral initiatives.
ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR

☑ This type of approach is generally more consistent with what survey data show to be the preferences of most (but not all) Canadians, as opposed to approaches that favour combat missions or other interventions that are not approved by the United Nations. Canadians by-and-large were happy with Prime Minister Jean Chrétien’s decision to stay out of Iraq, and have mixed feelings about Afghanistan.

☑ Country-specific occupations and agendas such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq do not sufficiently address the new security environment. We need to get beyond a single-minded focus on terrorism, work away from state-state conflicts, and take a more universal, holistic approach to international peace and security.

☑ Canada has a good track record of leadership in multilateral initiatives such as the Ottawa Treaty, ICC, and R2P. We have credibility and could lever this to strengthen international norms.

☑ By specializing in particular roles, such as peacekeeping, and by creating clear boundaries within those roles, Canada would be able to punch above its weight, focus military spending, and be more effective in implementing specific foreign policy initiatives.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

☒ Interventionism sometimes does more harm than good. The UN and the Human Security Agenda have a mixed record on multilateral initiatives, which are often expensive and make little progress toward nation-building or lasting peace and security. By taking part in such initiatives, Canada would foot the bill on potential failures.

☒ Multilateral security is slow. Peacekeeping, as we have traditionally known it, is becoming an outdated concept, and in many cases there is no peace to keep. Canada faces real security threats and would be better to focus on key issues, not holistic missions abroad, in taking on those threats.

☒ Choices made by multilateral institutions may not reflect Canadian interests or values. For instance, decisions taken by the United Nations Security Council members (who have different interests, values, and security concerns than ours) might differ from those we would take. And we do not want to become involved in major operations in countries that pose little threat to or relevance for Canada.

☒ Growing expectations in the international community for successful peacebuilding and peacemaking operations have exposed Canada’s weaknesses and limited resources. We simply do not have the capacity to contribute meaningfully to the demands of the new security environment, or even to meet our current commitments.

QUESTIONS

1. Can Canada’s security be strengthened through greater multilateralism?
2. What level of public funding will be required to provide the military capability and hardware Canada would need to uphold commitments made through R2P?
3. Will Canadians agree always agree with sending forces to intervene in cases of genocide?
4. Where should Canada focus its efforts in building international norms?
**Approach 3**

**Emphasize Continental Security at Home and Non-Interventionism Abroad**

Taking a non-interventionist approach, Canada would focus on continental/homeland security, avoid becoming entangled in alliances with other nations outside of its continental partnership with the US, and stay out of risky wars and foreign interventions not related to direct territorial self-defence. As described by Eric L. Nordlinger of Brown University, non-interventionism is a three-tiered ‘isolationist’ policy, featuring “a minimally effortful national strategy in the security realm; moderately activist strategies to advance liberal ideals among and within states; and fully active economic diplomacy on behalf of free trade.” This approach would avoid foreign policy that may produce ‘blowback’ or lead to expensive, drawn-out situations abroad such as the one Canadian troops face in southern Afghanistan. A non-interventionist approach, while accepting that Canada is a Middle Power without the hard-power capability of bigger nations, would leverage Canada’s assets (e.g., diplomatic experience and expertise, powerful trading partners, and valuable natural resources) to strengthen its security.

Key actions would include retooling the Canadian military for continental defence and realigning our strategic military partnership with the US to best support that defence; revisiting NAFTA so that it improves cross-border trade; reducing barriers to international trade; enforcing stricter immigration security; shifting funding away from international commitments toward port, border, and coastal security and defence; and reinvesting in our foreign service so that we can better build international norms that reflect our values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.
ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR

☑️ The new, changing security environment is too complex for slow multilateral institutions like the UN to deal with. Alliance-based coalitions that favour hard-power approaches also have their problems, as the sticky situations in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrate. Canada faces real security threats at home and should focus on defending itself against those threats. We should avoid involvement in expensive foreign missions abroad under the auspices of ‘national security.’ We should focus on protecting our Arctic sovereignty, our borders, and the safety of our citizens.

☑️ Overseas operations are expensive. Under this approach, Canada will have the means to emphasize diplomacy and call for disarmament, demobilization, and the renunciation of violence, and focus its foreign policy resources on diplomacy, homeland security, new trade relationships, and the like.

☑️ Canada would be able to avoid ‘outsourcing’ its sovereignty to any multilateral institutions or alliances that do not always act in Canada’s best interests, such as the United Nations Security Council.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

☒ Some Canadian political experts argue that internationalism has become a national trait of Canadians, one that would be very difficult to uproot without undermining the national identity of the country — in other words, non-interventionism is not likely to be popular with enough Canadians to make it a mainstream approach.

☒ After so strongly advocating for intervention in the face of gross violations of human rights, it would be difficult to maintain international legitimacy in favor of retrenchment. A non-interventionist foreign policy means Canada-led initiatives such as R2P would be up to other countries to enforce.

☒ Canada would have to renege on its current commitments to NATO — and this would cause serious harm to our reputation and credibility among our trusted allies. Failures in NATO and elsewhere could detract from, rather than enhance, our security.

QUESTIONS

1. Can Canada have influence internationally if it does not contribute, financially or otherwise, to addressing global problems — like poverty? Is it enough to just focus on trade?

2. Will greater continentalism secure Canada’s interests and security over the longer-term?

3. Is this strategy too interest-focused? Will Canadians want to abandon their international humanitarian role in favour of security in our own backyard?
CONCLUSION

Canadians — that’s you. What do you think? The approaches provided above should give you some ideas, but are by no means exhaustive. They’re a starting point — a point from which you can ask questions, consider options, and develop your own views. How can Canada position itself in a world where conflict is changing?

This issue, like any foreign policy issue, is complex. The world often doesn’t wait for policymakers to draft statements or for leaders to sign agreements. Navigating the best course for Canada, even with the tools we have, is difficult.

Canadians also face many questions on key, Canada-specific issues: should we continue our commitment in Afghanistan past 2009? How should Canada balance its commitment to multilateral peacekeeping with its security relationship with the US? Can current approaches to conflict really make the world safer, or are interventions doing more harm than good? And under what circumstances should a state have the right to intervene in another’s affairs?

As a thought experiment, imagine that you are the Prime Minister or the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the weekend. You have to report in on Monday — to a committee, to the House of Commons, to your spouse. What ideas, insights, questions, and options would help guide your decision making? How would you address the issue of changing conflict, and what do you think Canada and Canadians should do?
Traditional Peacekeeping: is intended to assist in the creation and maintenance of conditions conducive to long-term conflict resolution by the parties themselves, often in conjunction with international mediation. In practice, this means non-coercive, consent-based activities, usually to support a peace process or interim ceasefires, to help prevent the resumption or escalation of violence, and to establish a stable peace.

Second-Generation Peacekeeping: refers to the wider aspects of peacekeeping operations carried out with the consent of the belligerent parties but in an environment that may be volatile. This is distinct from traditional peacekeeping because second-generation operations tend to take place within states, rather than between them, and in environments where the interposition of blue helmets between organized belligerents was either not possible or ineffective.

Peace Enforcement: is concerned with activities that fall under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, giving the Security Council the authority to 1) determine when a threat, or breach of, international peace and security has occurred; 2) order provisional measures under Article 40; and 3) order enforcement measures to be taken against a state or entities within a state. In practice, the UN has authorized the use of military force to: restore or maintain international peace and security; enforce sanctions; defend the personnel of peacekeeping operations; provide physical protection to civilians in conflict zones; protect humanitarian activities; and to intervene in so-called internal conflicts.

Security: is the condition of being protected against danger or loss. In international politics, traditional conceptions of security use the state as the referent and threats refer to nuclear proliferation, interstate war, civil war, and revolution. More recently, human security has been presented as an alternate conception of security, with the individual as
the referent object, and threats refer to disease, poverty, landmines, pandemics, natural disaster, human rights, and violence.

**Non-State Actor:** actors on the international level that are not states. The admission of non-state actors into international relations theory is inherently a rebuke to the assumptions of realism and other "black box" theories of international relations, which argue that interactions between states are the main relationships of interest in studying international events.

**Canadian Security Alliances**

**North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):** NATO is a military alliance of 26 countries established on 4 April 1949. The organization established a system of collective defence whereby its member states agree to mutual defence in response to an attack by an external party.

**North American Aerospace Defence (NORAD):** NORAD is a bilateral military organization formally established in 1958 by Canada and the United States to monitor and defend North American airspace. NORAD monitors and tracks man-made objects in space and detects, validates, and warns of attack against North America by aircraft, missiles, or ‘space vehicles’ (e.g. satellites and space debris). NORAD also provides surveillance and control of Canadian and US airspace.

**Treaties**

**The Responsibility to Protect (R2P):** is a recently developed concept in international relations. It aims to provide a legal and ethical basis for 'humanitarian intervention': the intervention by external actors (preferably the international community through the UN) in a state that is unwilling or unable to prevent or stop genocide, mass killings, or other significant human rights violations. Supporters of R2P view it as a method of establishing a normative basis for humanitarian intervention and the consistent application of intervention doctrine. Detractors argue that R2P is breach of the system of state sovereignty and may legitimize future interventions of varying types. The R2P principles were first developed by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) (established by the Government of Canada) in the December 2001 report “The Responsibility to Protect.”

**The Ottawa Treaty:** or the Mine Ban Treaty, formally the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, bans completely all anti-personnel landmines (AP-mines). As of 2007, it has been signed/accessioned by 158 countries. Thirty-seven states, including
the People’s Republic of China, India, Russia and the United States, are not party to the Convention.

**The International Criminal Court (ICC):** was established in 2002 as a permanent tribunal to prosecute individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression, although it cannot currently exercise jurisdiction over the crime of aggression. The court was established on July 1, 2002 — the date its founding treaty, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, entered into force — and it can only prosecute crimes committed on or after that date. As of November 2007, 105 states are members of the Court. A further 41 countries have signed but not ratified the Rome Statute. However, a number of states, including China, India, and the United States, are critical of the court and have not joined.

**Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT):** is an international treaty designed to limit the spread of nuclear weapons, opened for signature on July 1, 1968. Canada signed later that year. There are currently 189 countries party to the treaty, five of which legally possess nuclear weapons: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and the People’s Republic of China. Four nations are not signatories: India, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea. India and Pakistan both possess and have openly tested nuclear bombs. Israel has had a policy of opacity regarding its own nuclear weapons program. North Korea ratified the treaty, violated it, and later withdrew.
END NOTES


2 Canada has a long history of addressing external threats – for example, the Fenian Raids, the War of 1812, the influenza epidemic of 1917-19, the threat of nuclear attack during the Cold War, to name a few.


4 Multilateral treaties include ballistic missile defence systems, above-ground nuclear testing, ballistic missile technology, and trafficking of weapons of mass destruction. See for example START I and START II, SALT, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty, and others.


6 For more details of Canada’s military history, see: http://www.WarMuseum.ca.

7 October 7, 2001 “An attack on Afghanistan begins, led by the United States; Canada contributes troops and fighter pilots to the coalition of the willing. On April 17, 2002 three Canadian infantry soldiers are killed in Afghanistan by friendly fire; eight others are injured.” (John Kirton, Canadian Foreign Policy in a Changing World 2007 Nelson: Toronto p. 531 and 170) In August, Canada withdraws troops from Afghanistan and in February 12 2003, Canada announces it will send 2000 troops as part of the UN-mandated Security Assistance Force in Kabul.


12 Kirton, 2007, p. 97

13 Ibid. pp. 97-98.


16 Gareth Evans and Bruce Grant, Australia’s Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990s (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1991) p. 323. For applications of the idea to the foreign policy behaviour of other middle-sized countries, see Andrew F. Cooper (ed.), Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers after the Cold War (London: Macmillan, 1997).
17 Jean-Francois Rioux and Robin Hay. *Canadian Foreign Policy: From Internationalism to Isolationism?* (Ottawa: Norman Patterson School of International Affairs. 1997)

18 *ibid.*