

What should the security component of Canada's foreign policy be in light of the current international situation?

Past history and recent events have shown how instability abroad can have a direct impact on our own security. For example, threats can easily emerge from countries striving with domestic unrest, religious fundamentalism, violent regime changes or armed conflicts, then spread to neighbouring states or overseas countries like Canada. Consequently, it would be in Canada's national interest to work on improving security and stability around the world. This, I believe, could be best achieved by developing a three-fold security policy.

Firstly, we should continue to advance Canadian values abroad, such as human rights, democracy, conflict prevention, trade liberalisation, good governance and humanitarianism. To prevent extremism from thriving and conflicts from rising, Canada should also take steps to address the crucial issues of poverty, discrimination and oppression affecting citizens of foreign nations. By helping them cope with social, economic, political and security problems, Canada could make a difference in improving their security and, as a result, in diminishing the threat these countries could potentially pose to Canada and other nations.

Secondly, the security element of Canada's foreign policy should put greater focus on Canadian involvement in bilateral and multilateral security agreements, and most of all with the United States – the only remaining superpower. By developing effective links with its allies, Canada can insure a higher level of protection to its citizens, thanks to the sharing of knowledge, expertise, intelligence and technology. In defining its foreign policy and to promote its national interest, Canada should not only maintain its membership and participation in international organisations such as NATO, OSCE, UN and Interpol, but it should also invest more energy into developing its commitment and its leadership role. By increasing its involvement, Canada could assert its international credibility, strengthen its relationships and develop new ones, always with the objective of promoting stability and security around the world as well as at home. Canada has expertise in several key areas related to security and it has the ability to make a difference in forging international consensus on how to deal with crucial security issues. We should therefore step forward and dare to play a greater role within these international relationships. It is a question of promoting international security and, consequently, of protecting Canadian security.

Thirdly, another aspect of the security component of our foreign policy should be the availability of a strong, versatile military capable of fulfilling our international security commitments and of maintaining our level of expertise in the field of peacekeeping and conflict prevention. Canada should commit to the allocation of sufficient manpower, financial and intellectual resources necessary to maintain and enhance that expertise but more importantly to work more efficiently towards a safer, more stable world. Such a commitment would serve as a long-term investment into the protection of Canadian security and the promotion of peace and stability abroad.

I strongly believe that promoting Canadian values abroad, emphasising the importance of international relationships, and developing a stronger military are key elements to protect and reinforce the security of our own nation.