



Conference of Defence Associations Institute

Position Paper

eDiscussion on global peace and security issues in
the lead-up to G8 foreign ministers meeting, March
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QUESTION: What are the top international security concerns and how should G8 foreign ministers address them?

The following response for G8 consultation is based on a study published in March 2010 by the Conference of Defence Associations Institute entitled, *Security in an Uncertain World: A Canadian Perspective on NATO's New Strategic Concept*, available online at www.natoconcept.ca. The major recommendations outlined in this prescriptive study of NATO's evolving strategic concept are indicative of an overall vision for Canadian foreign policy. Relevant portions have been extracted and situated within a G8 context for this paper.

While the following security concerns are broad in scope, they share important commonalities and can be loosely grouped into two categories: non-state actors and failed or failing states. Non-state actors have the goal of undermining the nation-state and failed states have the potential to destabilize entire regions. G8 countries have a shared interest in tracking, forestalling and weakening non-state actors, as well as monitoring and aiding failing states.

THREAT ASSESMENT

International Terrorism

A persistent and defining security concern of the 21st century is international terrorism, the perpetrators of which need only to succeed once to claim victory. Conversely, nation-states, which remain the dominant global political organizing structure, have the disadvantage of only having to fail once for their adversaries to claim success. Asymmetric warfare fuelled by religious extremism poses one of the greatest threats to the interests of industrialized and industrializing nations. Small numbers of people, especially when they are highly organized and ideologically driven, have the capacity to inflict disproportionate damage on the cumbersome (in comparison) nation state. Developed states, which have prospered on a policy of openness and vital trading links, are highly vulnerable as a result of these characteristics.

Porous Borders

The ease with which weapons of mass effect and the associated know-how can exchange hands compounds the above security concerns. This high degree of global mobility, both in the exchange of new technologies and of people, has brought new challenges to bear on the sanctity of territorial boundaries. Further, the autonomy of the nation-state is rendered increasingly porous by the emergence of elements such as cyberspace and interconnected prosperity, by design transnational and often out of the control of the nation-state.

Failed and Failing States

Another area of shared concern for G8 countries is the impact of failed and failing states. The Failed State Index lists 38 of 177 states as failed and many more as failing. The commensurate anarchy not only has a negative impact internally, but the spill over effect can have a devastating regional impact. This is of particular concern when failing states border authoritarian regimes or other unstable countries. The virtue of assisting failed and failing states is in the direct impact it will have within their borders, but can also be found in the long term stabilizing effect on regions.

Weak states are also more susceptible to political extremism, a statement that admittedly risks confusing cause and effect. For example, the 2009 Failed State Index shows that Iran has jumped 11 ranks since 2008. When one considers the possibility of radical elements of society gaining power through ostensibly credible mechanisms, the relationship between political stability and failing states takes on additional importance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Afghanistan and Pakistan

At the G8 Summit in Trieste in 2009, the Italian President designed an Outreach program inviting representatives from Afghanistan and Pakistan, regional actors and interested nations. Following these consultations the Foreign Minister's issued a declaration on Afghanistan and Pakistan, recognizing the regional dimension of the conflict and the critical work being conducted by the UN and other agencies in both countries. Noticeably absent, was a reference to the NATO led mission in Afghanistan. cursory mention was made of the insurgency and the need to strengthen the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The bulk of the statement recognized the critical role development and governance will play in promoting stability and peace, as well as the need to develop economic opportunities to counter the illicit and pervasive drug trade.

Recommendations:

- 1) Continue this outreach exercise. If it is not possible at the 2010 Summit, then discuss and schedule for G8 2011.
- 2) Discuss progress made through ongoing meetings of the Coordination Arrangement of the "G8, Afghanistan, and Pakistan Initiative" and identify projects for 2010/11.
- 3) Discuss the coalition forces and the ongoing counterinsurgency effort more directly to complement the emphasis on civil capacity building, which was identified in 2009. Civil capacity building can only take place in an environment where security prevails.

Inter-Institutional Cooperation

While nation states remain the dominant organizing feature, the modern political landscape is awash in supranational organizations, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, regional organization, aid agencies, etc. Identifying points of commonality between different organizations provides for a more holistic, nuanced and effective means of addressing security issues. For example, a critical component of capacity building in Afghanistan is the training of the Afghan National Police. The CDA Institute's study states that, "member-states [of NATO] must have well-developed national civil affairs capacity in policing, governance and reconstruction."

Complementing this initiative is a commitment within the G8 to support police training and developing civil capacity in member nations within a peacebuilding framework. As one of its examples, the G8 Report on Peacekeeping/Peacebuilding points to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, as well as the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force in Canada. While the various mandates vary, many of these organizations' objectives are complementary.

Recommendation: Identifying and fleshing out common areas of operation between institutions in key areas, such as building the ANSF, will be an important task for foreign ministers at this year's G8 Summit. As identified in the NATO report, civil partnership with the military and leveraging other agencies is a critical condition for success in counterinsurgency operations.

G8 Diversity

The composition of the G8 can itself be a valuable tool. For instance Japan, which is also a member of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Australia Group, represents an important geopolitical grouping that is unique in the G8. Moreover, the G8 is a good venue to engage Russia in a dialogue about defence and security. Considering Russia's opposition to NATO, important points of concern can be addressed such as the G8 Global Partnership.

Recommendation: Capitalizing on broad lines of intersection within the G8, could prove valuable in determining common security goals. It would be wise to steer clear of more controversial topics (such as NATO enlargement) so as not to divide the group into paralysis. Rather a continuation of discussions such as those about the dismantling and disposing of nuclear structures and materials (G8 Global Partnership) could be productive.