

## **Sustainable Common Security: a tentative vision of alternative policy priorities/HPL March 1, 2012**

PM Harper & GoC are vulnerable on international policy (foreign, defence, security and development policy).

Of course, the question of how vulnerable depends on having a leader who can and will speak truth to power, together with a coherent package of attractive policy options.

### **Harper's Vulnerability**

Polls infer that Harper and his policies are at odds with the international preferences of most Canadians on most issues—from the UN and multilateralism, the environment and Kyoto, peacekeeping and prevention of armed conflict, to social justice & secure pensions.

Harper overplayed the divisive fear card of a more dangerous world in a manner that aggravates at home and abroad. I can't imagine that Canada has ever had fewer allies, a point reinforced by the low support for a seat on the UN Security Council, which even the Americans were reluctant to help with.

Understandably, Obama's people probably weren't fond of hearing Harper's support for moving on Syria and Iran about three months back, before diplomacy, before there was a plan for such, before it became clear that the Americans were attempting to temper Israeli enthusiasm and dissuade an attack.

People are unnerved by accelerated climate change, financial problems, growing inequality, the prospect of new wars and divisive policies.

But on an array of issues, Canadians aren't hearing or seeing a compelling alternative.

The NDP could definitely do better at this.

### **How to frame our policy preferences?**

If it were up to me, I'd package the bundle under the umbrella concept of sustainable common security.

Our policies should stand in direct contrast to the narrow national security agenda of the Conservatives.

Although I would build on and revitalize the more decent Canadian traditions, we also need to distinguish ourselves from the liberal notion of human security, with their focus on the individual.

HPL 29/02/2012

**Sustainable common security** addresses the needs of Canadians and of the larger world. It offers a vision and useful organizing principle for responding to diverse global challenges. Increasingly, these challenges are viewed as stemming from dysfunctional systems that are driven by, and to serve, a minority at the expense of the majority. They include:

- Economic failure (driven by predatory financial institutions)
- Social inequality (driven by divisive political and economic elites)
- Environmental crisis (driven by unregulated industry)
- Violent conflict and insecurity, with new levels of militarization here and abroad (driven by a global MIC)

**Priorities to help advance sustainable common security**

Our international priorities should emphasize the following:

- Cooperation over competition
- Equality over inequality
- Multilateralism instead of regionalism or unilateralism
- A UN-centred defence and foreign policy rather than one focused on NATO or the Pentagon
- Pro-active prevention rather than a late reaction
- Inclusion and compassion rather than exclusion and self-help
- Constructive engagement instead of obstructive belligerence
- Global citizenship over patriotism and narrow nationalism

## **Sustainable Common Security: A tentative short-list of 4 international policy priorities:**

- 1. Canadian leadership in multilateralism, towards effective, equitable global governance**
  - Restore the UN to the centre of Canada's multilateral efforts in foreign, security and defence policy
  - Take a lead role in revitalising the agenda of the 1995 Commission on Global Governance (which was very progressive in most areas). It could offer the basis of our foreign and security policy.
  - Take a lead role to initiate a UN Parliamentary Assembly
  
- 2. Canadian leadership on war prevention:**
  - Encourage cosmopolitan conflict resolution (proactive efforts in emancipatory peacemaking, diplomacy and mediation)
  - Enhance peacekeeping & protection of civilians at risk
  - Take a lead role to initiate a UN Emergency Peace Service
  - Take a lead role to revitalize UN/intl campaign to advance a global culture of peace
  - Take a lead role in demilitarizing Arctic
  - Restore push for disarmament, development, conflict prevention & peacebuilding
  
- 3. Canadian leadership on global economic reform**
  - Initiate international dialogue over new (global) financial regulations
  - Support a Tobin (Robin Hood) Tax on financial transactions
  - Collaborate to remove international tax havens
  
- 4. Canadian leadership on global environmental revitalisation and control**
  - Initiate international dialogue over key regulations
  - Recommit to Kyoto+
  - Take the lead role to initiate a tax on high-powered or luxury vehicles (SUV's & trucks with V-8s or larger, and any car over 3.5 litres)