

International Insights

Just How Effective is Canada ' s Foreign Policy?

By Derek Fraser

In her Speech from the Throne opening the current session of Parliament on 16 October 2007, the Governor-General, Michaëlle Jean, introduced the government's intentions in foreign policy in the following terms: "Rebuilding our capabilities and standing up for our sovereignty have sent a clear message to the world: Canada is back as a credible player on the international stage. Our Government believes that focus and action, rather than rhetoric and posturing, are restoring our influence in global affairs. Guided by our shared values of democracy, freedom, human rights and the rule of law, our Government will continue Canada's international leadership through concrete actions that bring results." The Prime Minister, in his reply to the Governor-General, proclaimed, "In the eyes of the world, Canada is back."

While it is true that, in his meetings with foreign leaders, the Prime Minister has impressed his interlocutors by the intelligence and the clarity of his views, it is open to question whether he has brought Canada back in the eyes of the world.

In order to form a judgement on the effectiveness of Canadian foreign policy, we should consider Canada's relative place in the world, the resources it puts into the foreign policy sector, and the degree to which it focuses those resources on the attainment of certain realistic objectives.

Contrary to the impression of most Canadians, Canada has suffered, in the course of the last fifty years, a relative decline in its standing. The reasons for this decline are numerous:

- The growing strength and increasing consolidation of the European Union, coupled with the end of the Cold War, has resulted in the European one day a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. In fact, for various reasons, Canada may not be re-elected to a two year term on the Security Council when it poses its candidacy during the coming period.

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maintain a three ocean navy; it has expanded,

significant enough by our partners to give us a seat at

