



THIRD DAY OPENING REMARKS

Date: November 20, 2024

Disclaimer: This briefing note contains the encapsulation of views presented by the speaker and does not exclusively represent the views of the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies.

KEY EVENTS

On November 20th, 2024, Dr. John Gilmour presented the opening remarks for day three of this year's West Coast Security Conference. The key points discussed were defending Canadian sovereignty, the evolving threat environment, and the necessity of international cooperation.

NATURE OF DISCUSSION

Dr. Gilmour's remarks focused on defending sovereignty in an environment that, due to evolving threats, is more complex than ever. Subsequently, a fundamental problem for modern states is defending against threats while maintaining sovereignty. Dr. Gilmour concluded that international cooperation is fundamental to addressing threats, however previous alliances and multilateral institutions, of which Canada is a key contributor and beneficiary, are coming under increased threat.

BACKGROUND

Presentation

The evolving threat environment challenges Canada's existing sovereignty and security due to its new complex nature. Sovereignty was differentiated into two forms, internal and external sovereignty, Dr. Gilmour argued these are increasingly in conflict since Canada seeks to balance domestic sovereignty while remaining active in the international arena. Dr. Gilmour explained that the evolving threat environment has become transnational in nature and takes a more complex form through cyber, hybrid and space warfare as well as supply chain, water, and energy security, some of which are not necessarily traditional state-

generated threats. Therefore, singular states cannot guarantee security, while international cooperation is fundamental to state level security. Finally, Dr. Gilmour concluded that while Canada was previously protected by its geography, alliances, and hard and soft power, these are now under threat.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- The contemporary threat environment has reached a complexity not seen since the peak of the Cold War.
- Security threats are not controlled by singular states but rather are transnational in nature due to global developments including social media, mass transportation, and global networks.
- Despite challenges to multilateralism, international cooperation maintains fundamental to addressing these security threats.
- Canada's traditional stable position protected by its geographical location, its strong alliances with key players such as the US, NATO, and Five Eyes, is now under threat due to the emerging and expanding threat environment.

FURTHER READING

Gilmour, J. (2024). DOES CANADA NEED A DEDICATED INTELLIGENCE STRATEGY?. *The Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and Warfare*, 6(3), 110–112. <https://doi.org/10.21810/jicw.v6i3.6371>

Gilmour, J. (2021). Does Canada have anything in the way of a strategic warning intelligence culture (and does it need one)?. *The Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and Warfare*, 4(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.21810/jicw.v4i2.3623>



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