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# Canada's Global Role: A Strategic Assessment of its Military Power

JOSEPH R. NUNEZ

The comity between Canada and the United States is testimony to the strength of liberal peace. The Rush-Bagot Treaty of 1818 is still in effect and has been described as the “longest lasting and most successful disarmament treaty in international history.”<sup>1</sup> Canadians do not go to bed worrying if the United States is going to attack. We have become so interdependent that it is impossible to see our paths diverging to such a degree that our special relationship is jeopardized. Within the Americas, Canada is the democracy with which we have the most in common, whether it is history or kinship. In fact, Canada and the United States are an example of how values and interests can converge so pervasively that each side takes the other for granted, akin to a long-married couple. Nevertheless, important political differences are highlighted when administrations emerge from very different political viewpoints, as was the case between Prime Minister Jean Chretien and President George Bush. Moreover, Canada generally worships at the United Nations altar, whereas the United States is skeptical about the United Nations’ ability to provide timely and sound handling of global problems. In truth, both positions are somewhat flawed, because one state is trying to use an international organization to magnify its modest power, while the other state is more eager to use its superpower status to disengage from slow UN deliberations to craft its own solutions to security threats.

A major cause of divergent views is the power imbalance between these two neighbors. On the whole, Canada is a middle-power—it possesses a great-power economy and a less-than-middle-power military. Its neighbor is a superpower. This comparative sense of weakness inspires some Canadians

to complain of US hegemony. Yet this complaint often has more to do with cultural influence than with economic or political-military dominance. The Canadian economy continues to grow more vibrantly than its NAFTA partners on a per capita basis, and Canada is a major beneficiary of free trade—the United States is its number one trading partner.

The two countries also enjoy a long and institutionalized defense partnership, but it is not without its difficulties. The defense relationship has been strained for well over a decade, although the cracks in this partnership did not rise to public attention until the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Bluntly stated, Ottawa tolerated a major decline in its military for years while it signed up for more UN peacekeeping missions than it could adequately manage.<sup>2</sup> Washington was relatively quiet about this martial decline until homeland security rose as a national security priority, an imperative connected to the Global War on Terror.

### *Canada's Place in the World*

Canada's current global conundrum is tied to its identity crisis. Formerly an important player on the world stage, its influence is now greatly diminished. Critics are quick to point out that Canada spends little on its military, less than \$265 per capita, making it last among major North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members.<sup>3</sup> On a Gross National Product (GNP) basis, Canada spends just 1.1 percent on defense, putting it on par with Liechtenstein.<sup>4</sup> One senior Canadian officer described his country's challenge to overcome its geostrategic handicap as, "We are a regional power without a region."<sup>5</sup> Ottawa still possesses a measure of global clout through its dynamic economy. Choices it makes early in the 21st century will have a major impact on its ability to halt this decline, especially in defense, and to rebuild its strength and stature within the international system. It is fair to say that Canada is reassessing its future defense direction, scaling back on traditional peacekeeping commitments, increasing its role in peace enforcement operations, and taking a new look at its security relationship with the United States.

Canadians see themselves as global peacekeepers, and this is reinforced in the Canadian press, vividly displayed on their currency, and echoed in conversations on the street. But the reality is different from the perception.

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Using United Nations peacekeeping operations statistics, the Canadian contribution to UN missions is now rather small. Of 92 countries furnishing forces, Canada ranks 34th, placing it in the middle third. With just 239 service members deployed, Canada pales in comparison to, say, Pakistan with 5,252 on UN missions. Even within the Americas, Canada is not the largest contributor. Uruguay, Argentina, and the United States provide more peacekeeping personnel.<sup>6</sup>

Over the last 15 years, Ottawa has developed a greater hemispheric orientation, a huge departure from its traditional Euro-centric focus. This change began after World War II, as Canada moved from the British sphere to a North American commitment.<sup>7</sup> A key challenge for Canada is deciding between two roles—continuing to support a multitude of UN missions or asserting greater interest in a regional approach to peacekeeping and other operations through hemispheric cooperation.<sup>8</sup> Part of the soul-searching is due to demonstrated difficulties in mustering adequate forces with proper equipment, not to mention deployment and sustainment. Experts such as Joseph Jockel argue that the country faces hard choices because Canada's peacekeeping orientation has led to a significant degradation of its combat capability, particularly its ability to sustain military operations at brigade level.<sup>9</sup> This UN peacekeeping orientation began long ago with Canada's involvement in the Suez Crisis. In his book, *Canada's Army: Waging the War and Keeping the Peace*, author J. L. Granatstein explains the change in military focus:

At the United Nations on November 1 [1956], Lester Pearson, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, proposed that the Secretary-General "begin to make arrangements with Member Governments for a United Nations force large enough to keep these borders at peace while a political settlement is being worked out. . . . My own government would be glad to recommend Canadian participation in such a United Nations force." This idea and Pearson's subsequent role in creating the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) won him the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize. . . . The crisis affected the army in other ways as well. First, Pearson's Nobel Prize made Canadians into the world's leading believers in peacekeeping. Every world crisis after 1956 saw Canadians demanding their troops bring peace to the world.<sup>10</sup>

The logic of a diminished Canadian military is easy to grasp. Internationally, Canada enjoys the security umbrella afforded by the United States. Thus, it acts as a free rider and can fund its defense on the cheap. Monies not devoted to defense are used to pay for domestic programs. Probably no single document illustrates this policy better than the "Speech from the Throne" given on 30 September 2002, outlining then-Prime Minister Chretien's vision for Canada. The international dimension of the speech is less than ten percent of the text. Moreover, it raises more questions than it answers. There is a pledge

“to work with its allies to ensure the safety and security of Canadians” and “to work through organizations such as the United Nations to ensure that the rule of international law is respected and enforced.”<sup>11</sup> It vaguely states that Canada “will work with the United States to address our shared security needs.”<sup>12</sup> Finally, there is a brief allusion to the military:

In the face of rapid change and uncertainty, the government must engage Canadians in a discussion about the role that Canada will play in the world. Before the end of this mandate, the government will set out a long-term direction on international and defence policy that reflects our values and interests and ensures that Canada’s military is equipped to fulfill the demands placed upon it.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Canadian Defense after World War II***

Canada long defended itself with militias, not standing armies. It was not until after World War II that Canada made a strong commitment to a full-time force. Even so, the government was vague and tentative in its support for the end-strength originally planned, resulting in an army that was half of what was promised, and great uncertainty over defense requirements.<sup>14</sup> A major part of that uncertainty revolved around its ascending ally, the United States.

As the Cold War emerged, Canada and the United States became partners in defense, but did not institutionalize this partnership until 1957 with the creation of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). This idea of working together to defend the North American continent dates back to 1940 when the two executives, Prime Minister Mackenzie King and President Franklin Roosevelt, met in Ogdensburg, New York, to discuss the war and common defense challenges. A binational command, NORAD was established in 1958 and headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where it still is today. The command’s original mission was to provide “operational control of continental air defenses against the threat of Soviet bombers.”<sup>15</sup>

The practical effect of the NORAD agreement was that it helped justify the modernization of a Canadian Air Force. It did little to bolster the Canadian Army. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, founded in 1949, was more beneficial to Canada’s ground forces. Though obviously more focused on Europe than North America, NATO provided a reason for Canada to raise and maintain combat brigades. The Canadian Army’s mettle, and Canada’s military as a whole, were tested and validated with their participation in the Korean War, a conflict supported by the United Nations.<sup>16</sup>

The mid-1950s, however, marked the apex for Canada’s military strength. After that, two factors served to reduce the nation’s combat capability. The first was Ottawa’s peacekeeping orientation, and the second was the diminishing fear of a Soviet attack. In 1968 Pierre Trudeau ascended as the new

Liberal Party Prime Minister to further change the military. Under his leadership, Canada reduced its forces in Europe (under NATO) by half. Additionally, peacekeeping declined in priority.<sup>17</sup> During this period Canada's navy lost its only aircraft carrier, its army said goodbye to a number of proud regiments, and its air force was forced to wait another decade to receive new aircraft.<sup>18</sup>

Canadian forces did not fare much better under Conservative Party leadership, however. The need to cut budget deficits, coupled with the end of the Cold War, meant that additional support was not forthcoming, and cut-backs became the order of the day. Further damaging Canada's military reputation in NATO was the realization that because of declining airlift and sealift capabilities, Canada could not deploy a brigade with sufficient speed.<sup>19</sup> One Canadian historian refers to the period after 1968 as "professionalism under siege."<sup>20</sup> The major criticism resounding among various experts on Canadian military history is that strategically the country traded ends for image, choosing form over substance. It was more important to have a presence than to materially shape the outcome. During this same period, Canada jumped into every UN peacekeeping operation and maintained its involvement in NATO and NORAD, albeit with reduced forces and rapidly declining equipment, logistics, and strategic lift, not to mention morale.

In the post-Cold War global environment of growing nationalism and failed states, the 1990s reflected a growing demand for peacekeepers and peacemakers. For Canada's shrinking military, it was a means to an end—survival. But significant costs arose from this emphasis on peacekeeping. The military leadership disliked peacekeeping duty because it reduced unit combat effectiveness. Peacekeeping was antithetical to maintaining the fighting ability of soldiers because they rarely performed combat tasks. Another problem was that many missions lasted indefinitely, depriving the military of soldiers needed to maintain units at home. Additionally, the increasing number of missions, coupled with a smaller military, meant that many peacekeepers would return from one mission and then soon deploy on another. If you add the declining level of support to these soldiers, it is easy to see how morale declined precipitously. Finally, while Canada perceived itself to be the "world's moral superpower," performing good works, making peace, and advancing human security, this was a hollow reality.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Canada's Security and Defense Posture in the 21st Century***

A growing number of Canadians see their country in positive domestic and negative international terms. The economy has been healthy for many years, affording Canadians a high quality of life and a comprehensive social welfare system. But beyond the borders the picture is very different, as Andrew Cohen explains:

The truth is that Canada is in decline in the world today. It is not doing what it once did, or as much as it once did, or enjoying the success it once did. By three principal measures—the power of its military, the generosity of its foreign aid, the quality of its foreign service—it is less effective than a generation ago. . . . To argue that Canada has abandoned or diluted its traditional roles in the world isn't terribly new. The argument has been made in different ways different times. It is just that now—with the country's leadership in play, the war on terrorism in train, and the military in eclipse—the sense of loss has become more acute, gathering a momentum of its own.<sup>22</sup>

Clearly, the events of 2001 changed Canada's views about North American security. They also challenged assumptions about Ottawa's place in the world, and the nature of its political, economic, and military relationship with Washington. Canadian concern grew over the development of a new security architecture for North America. But it should surprise no one that Canadians are favorably oriented toward increased security cooperation. NORAD provides a working framework for such cooperation. Historically, Washington and Ottawa worked closely during World War I and II—in fact, Canada jumped into the fight before the United States, and it was Ottawa that persistently encouraged Washington to join the war. This cooperation produced a strong defense partnership. The two countries are the only Western Hemisphere members of NATO.

Most Canadians see the US initiative to create Northern Command through the dilemma that journalist Jim Travers describes as the choice to “share defense or be tossed aside.”<sup>23</sup> Borrowing an analogy from classical literature, Travers describes Canada's security challenge:

Shocked awake by Sept. 11, Washington, or Gulliver, is not about to be constrained by the petty concerns of the Lilliputians. Canada is the most exposed of the Lilliputians. Perched precariously along the great undefended cliché and historically committed to securing America's back door, [Canada] faces an unambiguous imperative: It can share responsibility for continental defense or it can be tossed aside as Gulliver stirs.<sup>24</sup>

Reflected in these choices are concerns about the adequacy of Ottawa's military, the uneasiness of living next to a superpower, and concern that Canada might be abandoned if it does not pull its share of the continental security mission. Others see difficult scenarios. Douglas Bland believes that terror attacks on the United States changed the important relationship between the two countries. Critical to this change is the huge impact that would result from Canada not doing its part to cooperate in preventing terrorism from penetrating the United States from the north. Bland asserts that “Canada faces no greater foreign and defense policy challenge than finding an appropriate and credible way to reassure the United States that Canada can live

up to the 1938 Roosevelt-Mackenzie King agreement that no attack on the United States could come through Canadian territory.”<sup>25</sup>

The good news is that Ottawa is moving more toward Washington on security and defense matters, while still raising concerns about sovereignty and consultation. Canada has taken significant steps to improve border security in recognition of the need “to safeguard the Canadian and American homeland.”<sup>26</sup> And Michael Kergin, Canada’s Ambassador to the United States, has remarked, “Like many countries in the world today, the United States is Canada’s primary foreign policy concern . . . without the United States, Canada is pretty isolated.”<sup>27</sup> Canadian and US interests have much more in common—trade, rule of law, and democracy—than any differences that exist, so it is wise to join as partners in the war against terrorism.<sup>28</sup>

John Manley, former Deputy Prime Minister, has argued along the same lines. A complex set of intersecting issues—border reform, transportation, law enforcement, financial and immigration issues, and security cooperation—challenge Canadians to make what Manley calls “clear and conscious choices as a nation . . . what we value, what we will seek, what we must defend—and, ultimately what we are willing to do in order to achieve these.”<sup>29</sup> Acknowledging that sovereignty is an important Canadian concern, he argues that it “is fundamentally about making choices, and about acting responsibly in the national interest so that we are able to preserve that field of choice for ourselves . . . [S]overeignty must be dynamic—or else our country cannot be.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, if Canada wants to preserve its favorable situation as the number one trading partner of the United States, it must get beyond the shrill rhetoric about “American imperialism,” something present in academic circles and the media.<sup>31</sup> Manley recognizes that Ottawa can better preserve sovereignty by constructively engaging Washington to address bilateral responsibilities as well as benefits—that there is no free lunch. He argues, “Much of the almost 135-year history of our nation has been about how we establish and exercise our sovereignty within a shared North American space—almost always accompanied by ritual fear and anxiety over how a greater North America might mean a diminished Canada.”<sup>32</sup>

Until recently, Canada was known for peacekeeping and little else since World War II, though it did see combat in the Korean War, and some troops experienced brief combat engagements during peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and Croatia. This changed significantly with Canada’s 2001 deployment to Afghanistan. Canadian forces fought well with US forces against al Qaeda fighters. Even before Canadian soldiers entered the fray, they were well regarded by American commanders. The US commander in this particular instance, Colonel Frank Wiercinski, told reporters that because the Canadian soldiers were well trained, they would be integrated fully into



his task force. Wiercinski stated, “We want to bring capability that we both can put together, and by using the best of each. And I think we’ve done that. They bring capability, not liability, to this fight.”<sup>33</sup>

Canadian military ability was verified on 14 March 2002, when their forces engaged in fierce combat during Operation Anaconda. The Canadian-American offensive demonstrated the resolve and abilities of both countries. It was also a historic event, because it had been almost 50 years, dating back to the Korean War, since a Canadian military force had participated in a ground offensive.<sup>34</sup> The Canadian performance obviously impressed US military commanders, because the Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry (3 PPCLI) subsequently was placed in charge of Operation Harpoon, a mission to flush enemy fighters from mountainous caves.<sup>35</sup>

While there is no question that Canadian soldiers are of high quality and add real value to any operation, there are many concerns about the quality of their equipment, logistical support, air and sealift, and their ability to conduct operations above the battalion level. These concerns, though often raised by allies such as the United States, ring truer when voiced by Canadian officers.<sup>36</sup> Afghanistan is a perfect example. The deployment of the 3 PPCLI was a difficult and frustrating process. Once in Afghanistan, the commander requested a third rifle company to make the unit fully functional and interoperable. Peacekeeping experiences from the 1990s actually constrained the unit to the point of embarrassment, and the 3 PPCLI was forced to quickly change to more robust rules of engagement. When reflecting on the quality of provisioning afforded to his soldiers, and comparing it to how the Americans were supported, the Canadian commander stated that his unit felt like “sorry second cousins.”<sup>37</sup>

On the positive side, the 3 PPCLI brought unique capabilities that contributed to mission success. For example, the Canadian armored reconnaissance vehicles, called Coyotes, afforded mobility and protection, while their .50-caliber sniper rifles added accurate long-range effect. The commander stated that the combining of different cultures actually served to create a force multiplier.<sup>38</sup> The two units learned from each other, and brought unique experiences and expertise that benefited all. In short, the sum was truly greater than the parts. For example, the Canadian troops were experts at cold-weather operations and very skilled in their ability to influence community attitudes in the local villages. On the other hand, the Americans afforded the 3 PPCLI an opportunity to participate in the first combat air assault in Canadian history, and provided a good deal of logistical support for common classes of supply. Canadian soldiers and their commanders understand that in more cases than not, they will be joining instead of leading campaigns. That mindset alone is valuable for combined or multinational operations. In the

first deployment to Afghanistan, the Canadians furnished a battle group that was integrated within an American brigade.

The United States expected 3 PPCLI to remain longer in Afghanistan, but Canada pulled the unit back after six months. Another disappointment was Canada's refusal to join the "coalition of the willing" for the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Ottawa was troubled that Washington did not receive UN Security Council support for its decision to go to war against Baghdad, even though it agreed with the Bush Administration that there was justification to end the regime of Saddam Hussein. In the end, Ottawa mended fences with Washington by returning to Afghanistan in 2003 with 2,000 troops and provided the commanding general of the operation.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Political and Military Soul-Searching***

The 21st century has not been internationally kind to Canada so far, save for trade. Diplomacy and defense have been in decline for a number of years. Since 2001, Canada has been forced to reconsider its relationship with the United States, its place in North America, in the Americas, and in the world. The Liberal Party, in power for the vast majority of the past four decades, is very popular in Canada because of its success in running the economy and providing an extensive social security network. It is not a favorite of the military, though officers are not likely to complain because of their strong ethos of subordination to civilian democratic authority. But there is little doubt that they feel betrayed by their political masters. This is evident in official military documents. When reflecting on the state of the land forces, the army's strategy report stated:

Physical infrastructure is poor and deteriorating in some areas. The Army is facing significant shortfalls in firepower (both direct and indirect) and Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) capabilities. On the personnel side, the burden of incremental taskings imposed by cuts, establishments, additions (announced in *The 1994 White Paper*) and a continual high personnel tempo are taking too great a toll on many soldiers. There has been an excessive draw on our pool of Reservists to compensate for gaps in the Regular Force structure. Command and control (C2) is stretched due to staff cuts and heavy demands of new strategic initiatives. Collective training opportunities are inadequate to maintain formation-level combat capability, and we are experiencing serious skill fade in some areas. Finally, there is concern over the morale of the Army. There is a sense of uncertainty and, not insignificantly, a sense of mistrust of the senior leadership caused by constant change. A lack of unity in thought, purpose, and action is too often apparent.<sup>40</sup>

Canadian forces underwent significant transformation over the last decade, but it was neither by design nor positive. Units have been withdrawn from

Europe. They have been forced to deploy on a multitude of difficult missions under declining budgets. Much of their equipment is outdated, ragged, shabby, or simply not available.<sup>41</sup> Units have been mothballed, never to return, but requirements are on the rise. The military is suffering from “cultural upheaval.”<sup>42</sup>

The quality and size of the forces that a country can muster and deploy on global missions have a huge impact on its international standing. Trade is also an important measure of a country’s place in the world, of course, but military force and trade are related, particularly given Canada’s interdependency with the United States on security and exports. Now that trade is in danger. For years there seemed to be no domestic price to pay for letting the military fade, while perpetuating the myth of Canada as the great peacekeeper. But in the age of terror, Ottawa has good reason to change its course regarding military support.<sup>43</sup>

Canada used to take pride for being able to “punch above its weight.” Now it punches below its weight, causing many businessmen to fear for the future.<sup>44</sup> While the United States and Canada are both liberal democracies, enduring allies, strong trading partners, and culturally related, the security threats of this new age place additional burdens on the liberal community of states to stand and fight against non-state actors—sometimes aided by rogue and failing states—that employ terror, transnational crime, and globalized communications to threaten democracies. Ottawa can no longer offer glittering platitudes and then duck out when the global work must be done and the bills come due.<sup>45</sup> It may be a cliché, but freedom is not free, and neither is trade, at least not the generation or maintenance of it. To keep a global economic system functioning, democratic states must be willing to deter and defeat forces that threaten their way of life. Canadians are beginning to understand that they are way overdue in their payments, and must rapidly recapitalize defense assets to meet the burgeoning demands of today and tomorrow.

There is also a realization that Canada can no longer depend on NATO or the UN to advance Canadian values or provide a “soft balance”<sup>46</sup> against its powerful and assertive neighbor. Like it or not, Canada has cast its future with the United States. Yet, while Ottawa may first consider the Washington perspective, that does not imply subservience to its superpower neighbor. Canada can (and does) say no (or yes) when that is warranted in terms of Canadian values and interests. The Iraq war of 2003 is a good example of this, and so is the Afghanistan stabilization mission. Canada made a strong contribution to the international effort in Afghanistan because it was a US initiative that was given multilateral legitimacy by NATO and the UN. Already, Canada is exhorting its NATO partners to take on a greater role in furnishing troops, and this is in no small part due to the fact that Ottawa is straining to maintain its commitment over time.<sup>47</sup>

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***“Canada’s peacekeeping orientation has led to a significant degradation of its combat capability.”***

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Another important part of this political-military soul-searching is homeland and hemispheric security cooperation, and the two are related.<sup>48</sup> As Canada reduced its commitment to Europe, it increased its commitment to North America and the Western Hemisphere.<sup>49</sup> Since the early 1990s, Ottawa has sought greater engagement, trying to make up for lost time when it saw itself more as an extension of Europe. The creation of NAFTA in 1994 set a course that forced Canada to expand its strategic focus on North America. Where NORAD and other agreements provided a cooperative-defense mindset, the free trade agreement cemented the strategic orientation, and this is largely due to the fact that Canada, above all else, is a trading nation.<sup>50</sup> Its vibrant economy depends upon the large export sector.

Security scholars are increasingly focused on the concept of “trilateral security.”<sup>51</sup> Concepts like security perimeter, security community, and continental security are now common terms in government, academia, and policy institutes. While these are still largely ideas, rather than implemented, they are discussed in terms that are moving deliberately in that direction.<sup>52</sup> The military cooperation piece is particularly noteworthy. Canada’s membership in hemispheric forums includes the Defense Ministerials of the Americas (DMA), the Inter-American Naval Conference (IANC), the Conference of the Armies of the Americas (CAA), the System for Co-operation Among the Air Forces of the Americas (SICOFAA), and the hemispheric-wide reporting on Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs).<sup>53</sup>

In the fall of 2003, Canada hosted the 25th Commanders Conference of the CAA. This provided an opportunity to foster continued integration, increase the exchange of defense-related information, expand collaboration among American armies, create unity, strengthen inter-American friendships, and demonstrate Canadian leadership within the Americas.<sup>54</sup> Lieutenant General Rick Hillier, CAA President and Canadian Army Commander, emphasized the need to work together because “no one country alone can meet all the challenges in providing that basic security,” which he argued was the mutually reinforcing relationship between human security and the security of the state.<sup>55</sup>

In the summer of 2002, Canada joined the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB). This is an international defense and security organization that promotes cooperative security interests in the Western Hemisphere and oper-

ates under the authority of the Organization of American States (OAS). In the short time it has been a member, Canada has demonstrated its leadership value through the actions of its senior member on the IADB, Rear Admiral Ian Mack.<sup>56</sup> This expansion within the Americas is consistent with Canadian values and interests. Since the 1980s Canada has participated in a number of peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance missions. At the same time, Canada's trade within the Americas has grown at a rapid rate.

The creation of US Northern Command in 2002 prompted Ottawa to study the possibility of greater military cooperation. Given that the command's area of responsibility includes Canada, the United States, and Mexico—the members of NAFTA—it was logical to find a way to engage constructively. The Binational Planning Group serves this purpose. It provides Canada a bridge from NORAD to NORTHCOM. In typical Canadian fashion, the process is slow, methodical, and concerned about the preservation of sovereignty. Despite this largely bureaucratic obstacle to increased security cooperation, however, the actions of assigned officers have been positive and reflect a high level of mutual respect, innovation, and professionalism.<sup>57</sup> In particular, one area of homeland defense directly benefitting from this collaboration is naval cooperation between Canada and the United States, which bolstered the security of both countries' coastlines and ports. Given their nature and manner of deployment, along with their mutual reinforcing actions that have enhanced interoperability, the two nations' sea services are more disposed toward cooperation; thus, it is a good model for the two armies to emulate.<sup>58</sup>

### ***The Way Ahead: Challenges and Opportunities***

The Canada that Prime Minister Paul Martin now leads is moving further away from the United States culturally, and that has significant implications for economic, political, and military cooperation.<sup>59</sup> Ottawa is at an important crossroads that will determine its future direction in this new century. There has always been latent anti-Americanism in Canada. Historical differences—loyal colonials versus revolutionaries—and asymmetries of power underscore elements of distrust and dislike that are ever-present to one degree or another.<sup>60</sup> That is not to say that the relations between these two neighbors are rocky. In fact, since 11 September 2001 Canada has cooperated very closely with the United States to improve border controls, share intelligence, and track down terrorists.<sup>61</sup>

A huge challenge for Prime Minister Martin is to find a path midway between shrill defiance and fawning lockstep accommodation of the United States. Thumbing your nose at Uncle Sam, aside from poisoning relations, also serves to fan the flames of anti-Americanism, and this damages Ottawa's long-term interests. Rolling over for Washington makes Canada look weak and either unable to set its own course or unwilling to offer an alternative. On

top of this, Canada should refrain from the temptation to act as the moral superior in the partnership, taking the “role of provider of wise counsel.”<sup>62</sup> Such a haughty position is unwarranted, particularly considering Canadian words versus deeds.<sup>63</sup> If it is necessary to advise, do it privately. Remembering Canada’s positive influence on the US entry in World Wars I and II, and Canada’s willingness to make large commitments to back its moral position, should serve as constructive examples of how it can best influence US behavior.

If the business view of government is negative, it is much worse when it comes to diplomacy and the military, key components of foreign policy. Prime Minister Chretien’s Achilles’ heel was foreign policy. Canadian influence around the world declined during his tenure, and that is not just an American view.<sup>64</sup> More than an infusion of funds, many institutions require new leadership and strategies. And this leadership and strategic vision must come from the top.

There is little doubt that Paul Martin can lead Canada in a new direction within North America, the Western Hemisphere, and the world. His remarks, even before he assumed the leadership mantle, indicate that he clearly understands his environment and that major foreign policy change is afoot:

Our bilateral relations must be conducted on a far more sophisticated basis. Our goal must be to keep our two nations open to each other. . . . The absence of consensus in the U.N. should not condemn us to inaction. Multilateralism, after all, is a means not an end.<sup>65</sup>

One of Martin’s most daunting challenges is to navigate his way through the government’s bureaucratic maze to develop and implement a national security strategy. Canada’s foreign policy has remained basically unchanged for nearly a decade. The government’s last foreign policy white paper was published in 1995 and the last defense policy review in 1994. Even in tandem, these do not constitute a grand strategy. Aside from now being grossly out of date, these documents did little to link political, economic, and military elements of power in support of Canadian values and interests.

Outside observers often are puzzled as to why Canada does not have a national security strategy or an interagency process to coherently support its implementation. A close look at domestic and international factors provides some answers. As a country, Canada’s internal stability depends upon keeping its various provinces—particularly Quebec—happy, and that is no easy task. There is no unitary political culture, and Alberta and Quebec are polar opposites on the political spectrum. Given these major cleavages, it is risky to articulate a national security strategy because many Canadians are likely to object. Furthermore, setting a strategic course entails costs. The national budget must apply resources to support strategic ends, such as providing for a

strong military to prevent war and promote peace. And if more dollars go toward defense, then popular domestic programs might suffer cuts.

The international reasons for refraining from delineating a national security strategy are also significant. Canada is not an independent actor in the international state system. Thus, any strategy must acknowledge that Ottawa does not control its own destiny, whether it is the defense of the country or the deployment of force to promote its human security agenda. Defense of the Canadian homeland is dependent upon major US assistance. Canadian heralding of multilateralism is more than high-minded liberal internationalism; it is also a practical means of executing thrifty globalism. If this illusion of complete sovereignty and robust international action is credible, it allows Canada to focus on domestic priorities while still promoting international trade. It is also a safe agenda. Since the Canadian military cannot be deployed or employed independently and in significant numbers around the world, it keeps the government from taking decisive action that might be unpopular at home or in other countries. In fact, this is an insurance policy against making a bad call on unilateral intervention.<sup>66</sup> From the waning years of the Cold War until 2001, this approach worked for Ottawa, even if it was writing defense checks that it knew were going to bounce, eventually.

Prime Minister Martin is more strategically oriented than his predecessor. Just looking at defense, there are many good signs. His choice of David Pratt to serve as Defence Minister was a bold move for several reasons. Pratt bucked the conventional Liberal view by supporting Canadian intervention—with the United States—in Iraq. He has always supported the military, whether with regard to funding, new equipment, morale, or training.<sup>67</sup> Finally, Pratt is a strategic thinker who has some interesting ideas on security cooperation with the United States.<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately, Pratt lost his seat in Parliament in the June 2004 election, and thus must step down as Defence Minister. One hopes the Prime Minister will select a like-minded replacement.

After his election as Prime Minister, Martin's first visit was to the Department of National Defence (DND), sending a strong message of support. The impact was particularly significant since Prime Minister Chretien had declined to visit the DND during his decade of leadership. Martin thanked the men and women in uniform for their work at home and overseas, and then went on to address the challenges of the new century:

With the end of the Cold War has come a different kind of international conflict, a different kind of trauma. No nation can isolate itself from the perils and trials, the tribulations that the world goes through. Our capacity as a nation to respond on behalf of the world community is very heavily dependent upon the men and women of our armed services.<sup>69</sup>

One officer at Martin's speech stated hopefully, "We want to believe him; we want to believe that he does realize that in order to achieve a lot of his goals, such as putting Canada back on the world stage, . . . he can't do it with the state of the military he has now."<sup>70</sup>

If actions speak louder than words, then Martin is sending a strong message to the military. After his speech, he followed up by approving Pratt's urgent request to immediately fund new helicopters to replace the aging Sea Kings, despite a freeze in new federal spending.<sup>71</sup> Further bolstering Martin's position as a leader for positive change were initiatives to reform the structure of government to provide for greater domestic security and to improve relations with the United States.<sup>72</sup> To achieve strategic ends he is readdressing the means, by refocusing on structure and resources; soon the policies will follow that provide the ways. The biggest challenge is to provide enough resources to bolster the military. For example, the new helicopters will not begin to appear for another four or five years. What is worse is that calculations of equipment life-cycles did not take into consideration the toll that frequent and difficult operations, like Afghanistan, have exacted on materiel.<sup>73</sup>

### ***Conclusions***

Canada has an important role to play in North America, the Americas, and the world. The nexus of trade and security imperatives place it firmly within North America. The Canadian role in the Americas is growing in terms of economic and defense matters. Globally, Canada is challenged to regain its stature as a country that is willing and able to punch above its weight. Key to this is the regeneration of the Canadian forces, who have been asked to do too many missions with too few resources for far too long.

Whether Canadians like it or not, Canada's political, economic, and military power is in no small measure dependent upon the United States. As liberal states, interdependent neighbors, and allies, the two nations share a relationship that is positive overall. Canadians enjoy a high standard of living because they are an industrious people and thrive on their many exports to the United States, which remains their largest trading partner. Moreover, potential enemies are deterred from attacking Canada because its superpower neighbor would not stand for that. Canada has 11 percent of the population of the United States, yet it has a military only about 3.75 percent the size of its neighbor's. In budgetary terms, Ottawa spends 2.6 percent of what Washington spends on defense.<sup>74</sup> Canada has neglected its military for a long time because of the impressive security umbrella afforded by the United States, but this cannot continue given the terrorist challenges that threaten established democracies.

Even before 2001, Canada was out of synch in its global vision. Ottawa's peacekeeping orientation was no match for failed states and terrorism.



While soft power may be an effective foreign policy approach in this millennium, it is largely ineffective without significant hard power to back it up. And the truth is that today Canada has little hard power. A country that cannot muster and deploy even one self-sufficient brigade to global hot spots is not going to be taken very seriously, and is certainly not a middle power by military measure. The upshot of this is that Canadian concerns about sovereignty over their US relationship require serious reevaluation. The ironic verity is that Ottawa can increase its sovereignty only by working more closely with Washington. This is not to say that it should march exactly to the Pentagon's tune. The most effective strategy is to cooperate when cooperation aligns with Canadian values and interests. This also requires a great deal of diplomacy, especially since Washington tends to take Ottawa for granted. When Ottawa must disagree, it should quickly make its case with Washington, but in a discreet manner. It also would be helpful if Canada would produce a national security strategy that clearly articulates what the nation wishes to achieve internationally, and which provides the plans and resources to achieve it.<sup>75</sup> The new leadership appears to be moving in this direction.

In concrete terms, it is certainly wise for Canada to further institutionalize its partnership with the United States in defense of North America. Joining Northern Command would accomplish this, particularly since NORAD is decreasing in importance.<sup>76</sup> Of course, Ottawa should insist on a sovereignty clause, a guarantee that Canadian troops will not be deployed on any mission without the express approval of the Canadian government. Formally joining Northern Command, just as Canada did with NORAD, would confirm that the relationship between Canada and the United States is a model of liberal interdependency suitable for emulation. Democracy, capitalism, and security cooperation can keep the neighboring states strong and successful allies. Ottawa clearly benefits by working closer in defense matters with Washington—it can gain significant improvements in training, lift, logistics, and technology, not to mention respect. These benefits will enable the country to quickly deploy a well-trained and equipped military force to global hot spots and sustain them properly. Additionally, such cooperation demonstrates that Canada can provide valuable leadership in the Americas. But Ottawa should understand that Washington needs competent allies—ones that possess a modicum of hard power.

#### NOTES

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  4. Allen Fotheringham, "My 2003 Predictions," *Maclean's*, 23 December 2002, p. 41.
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  8. Canada, Department of National Defence, *1994 Defence White Paper* (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, 1994). This document reflects the difficulty that Canada faces as a mainstay for the UN—too many missions and not enough funding to support them. See also Department of National Defence, *Strategic Overview 2000* (Ottawa: Directorate of Strategic Analysis, 2000); and David G. Haglund, *Canadian Grand Strategy at Century's End* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 2000).
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  10. J. L. Granatstein, *Canada's Army: Waging the War and Keeping the Peace* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2002), pp. 345, 347.
  11. Prime Minister Jean Chretien (delivered by Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson), "The Canada We Want: Speech from the Throne," *Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Parliament of Canada*, 30 September 2002. See also Tonda MacCharles, "From Red Book to Blue Box: Other Parties See Only Recycled Promises," *Toronto Star*, 1 October 2002, p. A9. Opposition parties slammed Chretien for not strengthening defense.
  12. *Ibid.*
  13. *Ibid.*
  14. Granatstein, pp. 310-16.
  15. Fact Sheet, North American Aerospace Defense Command Agreement, <http://www.norad.mil/NoradAgreement.htm>.
  16. Granatstein, pp. 320-42.
  17. Desmond Morton, *Understanding Canadian Defence* (Toronto: Penguin/McGill Institute, 2003), pp. 79-80.
  18. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
  19. Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1999), pp. 263-69.
  20. Granatstein, p. 359.
  21. *Ibid.*, pp. 391-99.
  22. Andrew Cohen, *While Canada Slept: How We Lost Our Place in the World* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2003), pp. 22-23.
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  24. *Ibid.*
  25. Douglas Bland, "Canada and Military Coalitions: Where, How and with Whom?" *Policy Matters*, 3 (February 2002), 26-27.
  26. Michael Kergin, "Canada and the United States: Facing a New World Reality—Together," speech presented to the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, 6 February 2002. Michael Kergin is the Canadian Ambassador to the United States.
  27. *Ibid.*
  28. *Ibid.*
  29. John Manley, "Address by the Honourable John Manley, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, to the Canadian Club," 11 February 2002.
  30. *Ibid.*
  31. For a critical assessment of the Canadian-American relationship, see Stephen Clarkson, "Lockstep in the Continental Ranks: Redrawing the American Perimeter after September 11th," *Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives*, February 2002. See also James Laxer, "Surviving American Imperialism," *Toronto Star*, 17 February 2002, p. A13; and Paul Hellyer, "The Americans Will Dictate Our Military Roles," *Globe and Mail*, 7 February 2002, p. A11. For a more balanced view, finding fault with Ottawa and Washington, see Jim Travers, "Future Bleak if Canada in Lockstep with the U.S.," *Toronto Star*, 7 February 2002, p. A27.
  32. Manley.
  33. Mitch Potter, "Canadian, U.S. Troops 'a Team' in Kandahar: It's 'One for All, All for One,' says top U.S. Commander," *Toronto Star*, 6 February 2002, p. A1.
  34. Peter Baker and Susan B. Glasser, "U.S. Allied Forces Patrol Battle Zone, Pursue Survivors; Canadian Troops Join in Brief Firefight," *The Washington Post*, 15 March 2002, p. A14.

35. Bryan Bender, "Canadians Search for Al Qaeda Fighters," *Boston Globe*, 14 March 2002, p. 1. See also Newswire, "US, Canadian Troops Battle al-Qaida," Associated Press, 14 March 2002; and Steve Thorne, "Canadians Kill 3 Al Qaeda Fighters," *Toronto Star*, 15 March 2002, p. A10.

36. Author interviews and conversations with over 30 Canadian officers, from the rank of major through general, between October 1999 and December 2003, both in Canada and the United States.

37. Lieutenant Colonel Pat Stogran, "OEF: Interoperability in Combat, The Canadian Perspective," lecture presented at the US Army War College, Carlisle, Pa., 21 May 2003. Used with permission.

38. Ibid.

39. Press Release, "Operation ATHENA: The Canadian Forces Participation in ISAF," *Department of National Defence*, 28 November 2003, [http://www.gc.ca/site/operations/Athena/index\\_e.asp](http://www.gc.ca/site/operations/Athena/index_e.asp). As of that date, Major General Andrew Leslie served as the Deputy Commander of ISAF and Colonel Peter Devlin served as the Commander, Kabul Multinational Brigade (composed of Canadian, French, and German units). Canadian Lieutenant General Rick Hillier assumed command of ISAF in February 2004.

40. Chief of the Land Staff, *Advancing with Purpose: The Army Strategy* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2002), p. 6.

41. Kevin Cox, "Sea Kings Ordered to Stand Down," *Globe and Mail*, 31 October 2003, p. A9. Flights were suspended after two helicopters lost power during a training exercise. The Sea King helicopters are 40 years old and in poor condition after logging many hours under very difficult conditions. Replacements will not be available for five, perhaps even ten years.

42. Ibid., p. 3.

43. Denis Stairs, *In the National Interest: Canadian Foreign Policy in an Insecure World* (Ottawa: Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, 2003). Denis Stairs was joined in this study by David J. Bercuson, Mark Entwistle, J. L. Granatstein, Kim Richard Nossal, and Gordon S. Smith.

44. Roundtable Participants, *Canada in Transition* (Ottawa: Public Policy Forum, 2003). Roundtable participants included leading businessmen from across Canada, along with representation from media, academics, and members of think tanks.

45. Canada's actions in Afghanistan, and now Haiti, indicate that the government is trying to dispel this image of lots of talk but little action. It remains to be seen how long these commitments can be maintained with the current structure, personnel, and funding.

46. Dr. G. John Ikenberry of Georgetown University coined this term in 2003. He used it to describe the actions of other liberal states to peacefully reign in or modify the actions of the United States, a liberal superpower.

47. Mark Odell, "Canada Calls for Greater Commitment from NATO Countries to Mission in Afghanistan," *Financial Times*, 4 December 2003, p. 2. After August 2004 Canada will scale back its troop commitment to ISAF. At present, 15 percent of all Canadian ground troops are deployed overseas. If you discount the United States, this is almost four times the NATO average. Additionally, around 40 percent of the ISAF troops are from Canada. This highlights the lack of responsibility on the part of NATO member countries and Canada's concerns about this, to say nothing of the fact that Canada's influence in NATO has been waning for the last few decades. It also points out that the United States is a more reliable partner.

48. See my article, "Homeland and Hemisphere," *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 December 2001, p. 9.

49. Canada did not join the OAS until 1990.

50. Michael Hart, "Lessons from Canada's History as a Trading Nation," *International Journal*, 47 (Winter 2002-2003). See also Tamsin Carlisle and Joel Baglolle, "Canadian Businesses Fear Fallout of Iraq Stance," *The Wall Street Journal*, 28 March 2003, p. A11; and Bernard Simon, "Trade Concerns as Canada Sits Out War," *The New York Times*, 2 April 2003, p. W1.

51. Stéphane Roussel and Athanasios Hristoulas, *The Quest for Trilateral Security in North America* (Montreal: Institute for Research in Public Policy, 2003).

52. Ibid., pp. 3, 17-21.

53. DND Policy Group, "Canada-Latin America/Caribbean Defence Relations," Department of National Defence (Canada), January 2002, [http://www.forces.gc.ca/adminpol/eng/defence/ca\\_la\\_relation\\_e.htm](http://www.forces.gc.ca/adminpol/eng/defence/ca_la_relation_e.htm).

54. Fact Sheet, "Achievements of the CAA During the Last 10 Years," Conference of American Armies, 2003, <http://www.redcea.org/english/10year.html>. See also Bonnie Golbeck, "Canadian Army Hosts International Conference," *The Maple Leaf*, 5 November 2003, p. 8.

55. News: Headlines, "Canadian Army Hosts Conference of American Armies," Department of National Defence (Canada), 14 November 2003, [http://www.army.dnd.ca/LF?English/6\\_1\\_1.asp?id=76](http://www.army.dnd.ca/LF?English/6_1_1.asp?id=76).

56. Author interview with Major General Carl Freeman, Chairman of the Inter-American Defense Board, in Washington, D.C., on 17 November 2003. Author interview with Colonel R. R. Ryan, deputy chief of the Canadian delegation to the IADB, in Mexico City, Mexico, on 27 October 2003. Admiral Mack is a strong force for the reform of the IADB. He is working to promote a more useful role for the board in support of hemispheric security cooperation.

57. Author interviews with members of the Binational Planning Group, NORAD, and US NORTHCOM in Colorado Springs, Colorado, 17-18 January 2003.

58. For a good discussion of this subject, see Joel J. Sokolsky, *Sailing in Concert: The Politics and Strategy of Canada US Naval Interoperability* (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2002).

59. Probably the best analysis of this schism is Michael Adams, *Fire and Ice: The United States, Canada and the Myth of Converging Values* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2003). See also Clifford Krauss, "Canada's View on Social Issues is Opening Rifts with the U.S.," *The New York Times*, 2 December 2003, p. A1. On many social issues, from gay marriage to drugs, Canada and the United States are moving farther apart. Canadians also are generally more communitarian and less individualistic than Americans. Liberal Party Prime Minister Paul Martin retained power in the June 2004 parliamentary election, although his party lost 42 seats and he now faces the added challenges posed by leading a minority government.

60. John MacCormac, *Canada: America's Problem* (New York: Viking Press, 1940), pp. 127-42.

61. David G. Haglund, "North American Cooperation in an Era of Homeland Security," *Orbis*, 47 (Fall 2003), 676-82. Haglund also points out that Canadians are very sensitive to erroneous claims by US politicians and others about terrorists slipping across the border into the United States. Apart from combating ignorance on both sides of the border, leaders can set a tone for policy discourse that improves relations and perceptions.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 676.

63. The author had a conversation with a Canadian diplomat and senior military officer at an OAS conference in Mexico City on 27 October 2003, and during the conversation the diplomat took a morally superior tone on Canada's human security agenda in the Americas. When I asked what resources Canada was willing to commit to making this a reality, there was no reply. I turned to the military officer and asked if he agreed with the diplomat. He declined to comment. He did say that he was concerned about military resources available to provide assistance within the Americas.

64. Unsolicited comments made to the author by senior officers, officials, and diplomats from five countries in the Americas and Europe during 2003 in the United States. See also James Travers, "He Was a Failure," *Toronto Star*, 18 October 2003, p. A11. Travers describes Canada under Chretien as "a country that lost its prestigious place among the world's nations and a country struggling to find balance in its critical relationship with Washington." In typical Travers fashion, he also presents the positive accomplishments of the Prime Minister, none of which are in foreign policy, in James Travers, "He Was a Success," *Toronto Star*, 18 October 2003, p. A11.

65. Clifford Krauss, "Canadian Candidate Suggests an Effort to Mend Ties With U.S.," *The New York Times*, 4 May 2003, section 1, p. 19.

66. Casey Haskins, "Why Canada Has No National Security Strategy: An Outsider's View," unpublished paper, February 2004. Lieutenant Colonel Haskins was the US Army War College Senior Service College Fellow at Queen's University for 2003-04.

67. Author interview with David Pratt, Member of Parliament, Liberal Party, Nepean-Carleton Riding, in Ottawa on 16 August 2003. Mr. Pratt also served as Chair of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs. See also the editorial, "Soldiers' Pay Up, Now Recruit More," *Toronto Star*, 29 December 2003, p. A23, which argues that pay increases are largely due to the efforts of Mr. Pratt when he served as the Chairman of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs. Additionally, David Bercuson, Director of University of Calgary's Centre for Military and Strategic Studies, called Pratt "the most qualified person in a generation to have assumed the post [of Defence Minister]."

68. David Pratt, "Fostering Human Security: A Joint Canada-U.S. Brigade," unpublished paper, October 2000.

69. Bruce Campion-Smith, "PM Salutes Armed Forces," *Toronto Star*, 16 December 2003, <http://www.torontostar.com>.

70. Daniel Leblanc, "PM's Visit Buys Defence Staff," *Globe and Mail*, 16 December 2003, p. A5.

71. Daniel Leblanc, "Ottawa Pushes Ahead with Bids for New Copters," *Globe and Mail*, 17 December 2003, <http://www.globeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20031217.wucopters17/BNStory/Front/>.

72. For an excellent Canadian analysis on cooperation, see Stéphane Roussel, "Honey, Are You Still Mad At Me? I've Changed, You Know...: Canada-US Relations in a Post-Saddam/Post-Chretien Era," *International Journal*, 58 (Autumn 2003), 571-90.

73. For a comprehensive assessment, see Brian MacDonald, "The Capital and the Future Force Crisis," in *Canada Without Armed Forces?* ed. Douglas L. Bland (Kingston, Canada: Queen's Univ. Claxton Papers, 2003).

74. "Security Assessment—North America," *Jane's Sentinel*, 7 October 2003, <http://sentinel.janes.com>. These comparisons are not an argument for Canada to maintain military power on a proportional basis (either based on population or GDP). That is for Canada to decide. But they do illustrate that Canada is not doing enough.

75. Editorial, "Define Canada's Global Agenda," *Toronto Star*, 31 December 2003, p. A17.

76. Joseph T. Jockel, "Four US Military Commands: NORTHCOM, NORAD, SPACECOM, STRATCOM—The Canadian Opportunity," *Institute for Research on Public Policy*, IRPP Working Paper Series no. 2003-03, <http://www.irpp.org/miscpubs/archive/wp/wp2003-03.pdf>.