

The End of the Canada-U.S. Defense Relationship

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Introduction

The Canada-U.S. defense relationship, just like the 50-year struggle that necessitated and sustained it, is over. As the two countries become economically closer, especially with the establishment of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and more recently the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), defense entanglements have been moving in the opposite direction.

The bilateral defense relationship consisted of two central elements. The first was the joint protection of North America against nuclear attack. In the earlier days of the cold war, Canadian airspace and territory were nothing short of essential to detect and potentially destroy any attacking Soviet bombers. Many Canadians remember that John Foster Dulles once called their country, because of its location between the United States and the Soviet Union, "a very important piece of real estate." Americans and Canadians built several vast radar networks spanning the continent, coordinated fighter/interceptor aircraft operations of the U.S. and Royal Canadian air forces, and in 1958 placed what became a single system under the operational control of the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), whose commander-in-chief was always an American general with a Canadian deputy. Had the call to Washington warning of impending attack ever come, it might well have been a Canadian general on the line.

As the threat to North America shifted from manned bomber to the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM), (and as the United States shifted from active defense to reliance on deterrence) NORAD adapted, becoming in 1981, the North American Aerospace Defense Command whose prime function was warning and attack assessment. The importance of this function to the credibility and functioning of the American offensive nuclear posture meant that NORAD placed Canada in a unique position relative to other U.S. allies. No other foreign military personnel were as close to the central strategic nuclear forces upon which western collective defense rested as were those of Canada.

The second element of the defense relationship was a focus on the defense of Western Europe, especially through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), of which both countries were founding members and to which both contributed military forces, including the deployments of standing air and ground formations in Western Europe itself. This NATO focus was, of course, a continued reflection of the basic North American interest in preventing any potentially hostile power from establishing hegemony over Europe, a shared interest that had taken both Canada and the United States in the First and Second World Wars.

For Canada, NATO membership was always far more than just a way to pursue a fundamental security interest. It was a ticket into the "big leagues" of international diplomacy. Moreover, it seemed to offset the ties with the behemoth to the south. As the distinguished Canadian diplomat and scholar John Holmes put it, "Canadians also saw NATO as a counterweight...it would give Canada a multilateral

forum in which, by combining with other lesser powers, it could make its weight be felt and so be relieved, at least psychologically, of the inhibitions of life with one gigantic neighbor."¹ The United States, for its part, not only welcomed Canada's NATO participation but throughout much of the cold war fretted whenever Ottawa began to talk about reducing Canadian air and ground forces in Europe or even pulling them out, lest the solidarity of the alliance be threatened.

North American and NATO roles became the *raison d'être* of the Canadian Forces (CF) and the essence of their military professionalism. Functional ties with the U.S. armed forces became very close. This was particularly true of the air forces because of NORAD. But it was also the case for the navies which shared anti-submarine warfare (ASW) responsibilities related to the protection of both North America and Europe.

Today, it is evident that the geographic focus of whatever security cooperation may crystallize between the two countries is shifting "out of area," that is outside North America and Western Europe. But it is far from clear how extensive and enduring these new forms of bilateral military cooperation will be.

North America

To argue that the Canada-U.S. defense relationship has ended is not to say that strictly bilateral military cooperation in North America has or will soon terminate. Rather, collaboration in the direct defense of the continent will continue its already marked decline into strategic marginality.

The Clinton administration's July 1994 statement *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* scarcely mentions North American defense.² This is also the direction in which Canadian policy is moving. A January 1995 government statement by Ottawa emphasized that "direct threats to Canada's territory are diminished" and that future challenges to Canadian security are increasingly likely to be of a non-military nature, that is, economic, environmental and demographic.³

Even before the cold war's formal end, the level and tempo of Canada-U.S. defense relations, particularly in NORAD, had been decreasing. By the late 1980s, the frequency of Soviet Bear bomber flights near North America was dramatically reduced as were Soviet submarine patrols.⁴ Washington cut back on plans contained in the 1985 Canada-U.S. Air Defense Modernization Agreement, which had provided for a modest revitalization of continental air defenses, especially against air- and sea-launched cruise missiles. A new line of radars across northern Canada and Alaska was built, but now will operate on much reduced capacity. Of the four modern air defense radar installations envisaged in 1985 for the United States, two were cancelled, one was deactivated, and the last put on part-time alert status. U.S. funding for air defense forward operating locations in northern Canada was completely cut off by Congress.

Accordingly, the classic air defense mission against massive bomber attack has been put on the back-burner. Forces for this

mission have been put in what NORAD calls a "regeneration" category with expectation that there would be as much as a two-year strategic warning of any resurgent air threat. There are no longer NORAD "war plans," there are "concept plans" for North American air defense.⁵

With the North American air defense mission waning and with the threat of large-scale ballistic missile attack all but gone, focus has shifted to the possible role of Colorado Springs as part of a multinational "global warning initiative" designed to meet the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology.⁶ The possibility also remains that the U.S. might deploy a limited ballistic missile (BMD) system in North America or limited theater missile defenses (TMD) for protection abroad, especially of U.S. forces deployed overseas.

It is, though, far from clear how much emphasis the United States intends to put into North American BMD. The Clinton administration is continuing the emphasis on TMD. Although the new Republican-controlled Congress tried to speed up the fielding of a BMD system to defend the United States,⁷ the current legislation still only requires that a BMD system be "developed by 2003, with Congress having to vote again before it can be deployed."⁸

Ottawa has indicated that it is now open to including some reference to further BMD roles in a renewed NORAD agreement. Yet even if the United States does move to deployment after the turn of the century, Canada will not be needed for the central role geography required it to play in North American air defense. No systems critical for BMD need to be located in Canada or operated by Canadians. This, too, is a continuation of trends that were underway well before the cold war ended. No system to detect ballistic missiles has ever been placed in Canada or operated by the Canadian Forces. If Canada does become involved in missile defense, it is far more likely that it will be as part of a NATO-wide program for TMD outside North America.

Canada's 16 surface warships (including 12 new patrol frigates), plans to augment the country's naval presence in the Pacific, and more recent changes to the underwater surveillance system will make the Canadian maritime contribution to continental defense actually better than it is at present.⁹ The Canadian and U.S. navies can be expected to maintain close contact and cooperation. However, with the dramatic decline in post-Soviet naval power, purely national sovereignty protection duties, as opposed to bilateral roles, are much more likely to be the main focus of the Canadian Navy in the waters surrounding North America, as evident by its actions against Spanish fishing vessels in the spring of 1985. The only naval building now underway in Canada is for a fleet of short-range Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels.

In the 1980s there was significant Canadian concern about the operation of foreign, including American, submarines in the Arctic which led to the proposal in a 1987 Canadian White Paper to acquire a fleet of nuclear-power attack submarines (SSNs) capable of under-ice operations. Tensions rose with the U.S. Navy, which found the prospect of operating in conjunction with the Canadians under the ice decidedly unwelcome and doubted Canada's ability to pay for SSNs

and operate them effectively. The program was canceled in 1989 and recently the government revealed that it has abandoned plans to deploy an underwater detection system for the Arctic.¹⁰

In the past Canada's security relations with the United States have always been problematic in domestic politics. This is because Canadian governments have been caught between their support for collective defense, which has made military cooperation with the United States essential, and popular fears that national sovereignty and independence would be compromised by too close an association with the nuclear-armed giant to the South. The close working relationship between the Canadian and U.S. air forces and bureaucracies has, in particular, always lent a faint air of illegitimacy to NORAD. The suggestion was that the Canadian military, eager to play in the big leagues, had promoted an integration of defense efforts of which the political leadership has not always been fully cognizant. Should not Canada's real role in international affairs be that of a "peacemaker" and not a "powder monkey?"¹¹

In the present international circumstances, with no real threat to North America, the military relationship with the United States—especially NORAD—might be expected to encounter criticism in Canada as anachronistic business as usual at the expense of a new, more independent, Canadian defense policy. Moreover, with NAFTA binding Canada ever more closely to the U.S. economically, Ottawa might have anticipated a new reaction against continued military ties with the Americans.

However, the passing of the cold war has weakened the "peace movement" in Canada, depriving it of its ability to combine fear of nuclear war with Canadian nationalism. NORAD, facing renewal in 1996, has ceased to be an issue in Canada. But if the peace movement has been deprived of its strongest arguments against bilateral cooperation, the arguments of pro-defense groups have likewise been undermined. In the past, they also appealed to nationalist sentiment by contending that cooperation with the United States was an exercise in "defence against help." In other words, unless Canada monitored its own air and sea approaches, the United States, by strategic necessity, would do it, thereby challenging Canadian sovereignty and independence.¹² With the ending of the cold war, this argument has lost much of its persuasiveness, a fact not lost on Ottawa as it cuts the country's defense budget. So overall the end of the cold war has also meant the ending of bilateral defense relations as a issue of controversy on the Canadian public policy agenda.

Ironically, this should make it easier for Ottawa and Washington to renew NORAD in 1996 even though there is no compelling defense need to do so. Changes will no doubt be made in the wording of the agreement reflecting the altered global security environment. Reference might also be made to future cooperation in BMD. However, NORAD will still be a pale reflection of its cold war self.

This is not to argue against renewal. There is some merit in preserving an inexpensive hedge against international uncertainties. More concretely and immediately, not renewing would require

alternative arrangements for the restructuring of vestigial defense collaboration. Such substantive changes would not be costless in terms of money and attention that would be required on the part of both governments. The fact is, at this time North American defense is not sufficiently high on either Washington's or Ottawa's list of foreign policy priorities to warrant the time, effort, and money required to get rid of it. (Editors note: On March 28, 1996, NORAD was formally renewed by Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Lloyd Axworthy at a brief ceremony in Washington.)

NATO and European Security

NATO is even likelier, far likelier in fact, than NORAD to be maintained over the next few decades with both Canada and the United States remaining members. However, the changing nature of the alliance will alter the roles of Ottawa and Washington in a manner that will further diminish the importance of the bilateral defense relationship.

Despite many early, and now decidedly premature, obituaries, NATO has remained the dominant security organization in Europe and is poised to expand both geographically and functionally. Building upon the Partnership For Peace (PfP) initiative, the alliance has formulated a set of principles and procedures for the admission of new members from Eastern Europe. Revising military strategy, it is seeking more mobility and flexibility through the idea of Combined and Joint Task Forces (CJTF).

It is unclear whether either of these initiatives will come to fruition. What is clear, is that neither will succeed without American leadership. Moreover, if successful, both will change the nature of the U.S. role in Europe from that of a guarantor of West European security against a common threat to that of the key organizer of multilateral efforts to cope with instances of instability throughout the continent. In this new role, however, Washington will have a measure of discretion as to the extent of its involvement. Because many, if not most, European problems will not directly threaten U.S. vital interests, the president and Congress will be able to select where and when the United States will exercise a leadership role.

For Canada, the disappearance of the Soviet threat has broken the link between its security and that of Europe. Also gone is the old argument that NATO provides a counterweight to close defense ties with the United States. Moreover, as Washington and the alliance turn their attention eastward with the possible admission of new and more strategically important members, Canada's place and influence within allied councils will diminish from its already reduced stature. The political significance which Washington once attached to Canadian participation in NATO will fade into marginality. All of this will hasten what is already a clear Canadian policy of disengagement from NATO.

Well before the cold war ended, Canadians were disappointed in, while reluctantly having come to accept their inability to, build

trade flows with Europe into a "counterweight" to economic ties with the United States. While some Canadian policymakers retain hopes of expanded Canadian-European ties, the FTA and NAFTA can be taken as formal confirmation of Canada's economic future as a North American country. In addition, just like the United States, Canada trades today more across the Pacific than across the Atlantic.

To be sure, in recent defense and foreign policy white papers, Ottawa continues to proclaim its allegiance to the transatlantic ideal and to support NATO expansion.¹³ But in the 1990s, as Kim Richard Nossal of McMaster University recently has pointed out, "the notion of Canada as a European nation will remain a conceit, for few Canadians seem willing to embrace the costs that would give the fine sounding rhetoric of transatlantic projection concrete meaning."¹⁴

Those real costs that could still tie Canada to Europe would include defense dollars. The cold war was scarcely over when the Canadian government announced in 1991 that the country's two military bases in Europe, both located in Germany, would be closed and that the Canadian military presence in Europe would be reduced to a token force of 1,100, to be stationed at a British or U.S. base. A year later, Ottawa abandoned even this political symbolism. Canada's two fighter squadrons and armored brigade group would be brought home. Over the next two years, drastic cuts were made to the Canadian forces. By the end of the decade the regular force will drop to 60,000.

Nevertheless, the 1994 *Defence White Paper* states that Canada will maintain "multi-purpose, combat capable armed forces able to meet the challenges to Canada's security both at home and abroad."¹⁵ It will continue to supply naval forces to the alliance, crews for the NATO Airborne Warning and Control aircraft and individual personnel for various allied staff positions. And it will retain in Canada air and ground forces which could be sent to Europe. Despite overall force reductions, some 3,000 personnel will be added to the land forces. In the event of a major overseas contingency Ottawa would be prepared to send land, sea, and air forces simultaneously and "this could conceivably involve in the order of 10,000 military personnel."¹⁶

But this reconfiguration entails an even greater Canadian retreat from European defense than many realized. The White Paper does not earmark these potential expeditionary forces for NATO alone. Rather it states that they will be available for contributions to international security in general "within a U.N. framework, through NATO, or in coalitions of like-minded countries." As the White Paper acknowledges, a major crisis in Europe might find the very hard-pressed and undermanned Canadian forces deployed elsewhere, requiring difficult and protracted redeployments.¹⁷ Combined with continued budgetary pressures, it is not at all certain that Canada will be able financially to maintain a militarily meaningful contribution to European security.

Many Canadians would protest immediately that their country has more than demonstrated its continuing commitment to European security by its longstanding participation in the international efforts underway in the former Yugoslavia. In June 1995, there were

over 2,000 Canadian troops in Croatia and Bosnia making it one of the leading contributors—and this when U.S. ground involvement was limited to a small presence in Macedonia and a field hospital in Croatia.

It would be a mistake, though, to see Canada's recent peacekeeping efforts as proof of a permanent commitment to European security. In effect, Ottawa backed into Yugoslavia, thinking that it would be like other "classic" U.N. operations in which Canadian forces have been involved and which entailed the deployment of lightly armed multinational forces between combatants who had already stopped fighting. In Croatia and Bosnia, of course, there has been precious little peace to keep. At first, Canadians took pride in the prominent role their blue berets were playing. But as the fighting continued and when Canadian troops were taken hostage, Canadians back home grew increasingly frustrated. It was also frustrating for them to see their country excluded from the high-level contact group of countries attempting to broker a peace. On several occasions, Ottawa resisted the strong temptation to pull out lest it be seen as reneging on a commitment and undermining the U.N. efforts.

Those commitments, however, were begun under the previous government. For its part the Chrétien government was less enthusiastic about the Yugoslavian role. It has continually sought to block and then only grudgingly accepted U.S.-sponsored demands that air strikes be used to punish the Serbs for not respecting safe areas. The pattern "was one of...seizing every opportunity to reduce the size and exposure of Canadian troops..."¹⁸ After the 1995 summer offensive, Canada joined other U.N. forces in leaving Croatia. Then, following NATO's massive air assault on the Bosnian Serbs and the U.S. brokered cease fire, the prime minister announced "with pleasure" that the Canadians would be withdrawn from Bosnia by November 1995 because "the mission was over."¹⁹

The problem for Ottawa was that the mission was not over. President Clinton has made a major commitment of American power and prestige, and perhaps his own re-election, on being able to lead NATO in securing the November 21, 1995 settlement in Bosnia. The alliance likewise has put its credibility to European security on the line. Thus as much as the Chrétien government would have liked to have put Bosnia behind it, the Clinton initiative put Ottawa into a difficult position.

On the one hand, because NATO's 60,000 person force for Bosnia is to have a war fighting capability, here was the opportunity for Ottawa to redeem itself in the eyes of its allies as well as live up to the stated objective contained in the White Paper, and deploy a sizable combat-capable force in support of the alliance. This would also have been consistent with the White Papers's call for NATO to take a more active role in peacekeeping.

On the other hand, given defense department budget and manpower cuts, the heavy peacekeeping commitments of recent years, and public opinion, Canada is in no position to send a major force back into Bosnia, particularly one that may well have to wage war against violators of the peace agreement. The newly appointed chief of the

defense staff, General Jean Boyle, acknowledged in February 1996, that the Canadian Army lacks the equipment to fight in a "high-intensity combat theater."²⁰ Moreover, the Chrétien government could have claimed that Canada had done more than its share in the Balkans and done so when the Europeans proved themselves incapable of solving the problem on their own and the United States was reluctant to become more heavily involved.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the reaction in Ottawa to the American call for support was ambivalence. After the foreign minister, speaking in Washington, said Canada would participate in the NATO force, both he and the prime minister backed away from a pledge to send combat forces, saying that Canada would participate "only if absolutely necessary."²¹ Canada was the last NATO country to decide on the size of its commitment. While attending the December 1995 NATO meeting, the foreign minister noted that although Canada was a staunch supporter of peacekeeping, "this is not a decision like those in past on the subject of real traditional peacekeeping of the United Nations it is something else...We could spend much more money in the reconstruction element of the package than on the military package. But obviously we will have to consider the need of NATO, the demands in regards to troops, how much has been already contributed by others."²²

On the latter point, Ottawa noted that although the United States, Britain, and France were sending sizable forces, other contributors, even Russia with 1,500 troops, were dispatching more modest units. Thus, though the Canadian cabinet considered a range of options prepared by the military, including the dispatch of some 2,000 combat troops, there was little likelihood that such a force would be sent.²³

Ottawa's eventual decision to send a force of 1,000 reflects its ambivalence toward the operation and domestic constraints. The bulk of the force will be support as opposed to combat troops and Ottawa also made clear that the deployment would only be for one year. Canada is providing a headquarters and commanding general of a multinational brigade that will include 850 Czech troops and about 1,200 from Britain and Malaysia assigned to the British sector of Bosnia northwest of Sarajevo. About 750 Canadians are deployed at the headquarters in Coralic and the rest at a supply depot supporting the headquarters located at Velika Kladusa on the Croatian border. Canadian troops will also be responsible for demilitarizing and removing mines along a part of the border between the Muslim Croat federation and the Serb-controlled area of Bosnia.²⁴ Given the nature of the mission and the dangers, the force will be more heavily armed than previous Canadian units in the former Yugoslavia and will have the authority to defend themselves under the more "robust rules of engagement" that will apply to other NATO forces.

In justifying the small size of the force, Minister of National Defence David Collette cited Canada's three-year long participation in U.N. peacekeeping in Yugoslavia. "This is what Canadians would expect us to do."²⁵ The government also points out that Canada will be contributing to rebuilding efforts in Bosnia and

to U.N. efforts to establish police forces, and will be working with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to set up free elections and national human rights institutions.

In making this commitment, Ottawa was trying to mend fences with NATO. As Mr. Collette noted, Canada had a "moral obligation" to support the alliance at this "historic time for NATO."²⁶ Thus, despite the initial hesitation, it was unlikely that Canada would have chosen not to participate in the Bosnian effort at all. In the final analysis, though, the decision can be explained simply by the continuing Canadian desire not to be entirely left out of a major American-led western undertaking.

Critics in Canada have charged that this was the "least of what we can get away with."²⁷ They allege that the "embarrassingly small" size of the force and its predominantly non-combat composition is unworthy of member of the Group of Seven (G-7) major industrial nations and will undermine Canada's influence in Europe.²⁸ This criticism is both unfair and unrealistic not only in terms of what Canada could reasonably be expected to contribute but with regard to the broader international context.

While the Canadian contribution was less than Washington had hoped for, it does compare favourably with those of other countries and it performs useful roles for IFOR. No doubt the size of the force and the delay in deciding upon it are viewed in Europe and Washington as further evidence of a desire to distance Ottawa from the alliance's new role in coping with Europe's ethnic instability. Yet this is an accurate assessment of the direction of Canadian policy as contained in the 1994 White Paper. While allies might complain, it really did not make much of a difference what the size of the Canadian contribution was. It was far more consequential for the Clinton administration to garner West European contributions, the participation of some of the PfP countries, and especially that of Russia. Should the U.S.-brokered settlement on Bosnia flounder on the killing fields of Yugoslavia or in Congress, then little importance will be attached to Ottawa's reluctance to become involved or the size of Canada's commitment. Above all, it is fallacious to link the size and role of the Canadian contribution to IFOR to expectations of influence. After the experience of the last few years in Yugoslavia and the dominant American role in the NATO initiative, there should now be no illusions in Ottawa about having any influence over the Bosnian peace process or major NATO decisions.

Whatever happens in Yugoslavia, Canada will retain its seat at the perhaps soon-to-be enlarged NATO table. Its diplomats and senior military officials will participate in allied affairs and its small forces will continue to exercise with those of older allies and PfP nations. But in Europe as in North America, the Canada-U.S. defense relationship will continue to slide from marginality to obscurity.

Out of Area and the Future of U.N. Peacekeeping

As the two central elements of the bilateral defense relationship—North American and NATO—diminish, attention is increasingly focused upon on Canada-U.S. security links “out of area.” Here there are two broad dimensions to collaboration, regional security arrangements, including ad-hoc coalitions formed under U.S. leadership, and U.N. peacekeeping operations. During the cold war, Canada had very little involvement in American-led regional security efforts. Ottawa did not even join the Organization of American States (OAS) until 1989. Nor did Canada participate in any limited wars or interventions between the Korean War and the Gulf War.

There was, however, an implicit and sometimes explicit collaboration between Canada and the United States in the realm in U.N. peacekeeping. This was based upon a compatibility between Canada's desire to use peacekeeping partly as a way to project a more independent identity externally and U.S. national security interests. For the United States, U.N. peacekeeping operations were used to fill a political vacuum and prevent Soviet intervention, cool conflict between allies, monitor agreements negotiated by the U.S. officials, or serve “U.S. foreign policy goals of the moment.”²⁹ While Canadians often viewed peacekeeping as a neutral activity in the context of the dominant East-West struggle, Washington welcomed and appreciated Canada's participation precisely because Ottawa was a loyal western ally.³⁰ Nevertheless, peacekeeping remained marginal to global security relations, and between 1979 and 1988, the U.N. in general fell into great disfavor with the Reagan administration.

Since the end of the cold war the United States and Canada have collaborated in a range of multilateral operations from the peace enforcement of the Gulf War to efforts at peacekeeping in Somalia and Haiti. But it is premature to conclude that the two countries are about to engage in a new joint approach to international security threats. For here, too, the relationship is changing as each country adopts different approaches to regional conflicts and instability.

When Washington does feel itself “bound to lead,” it will seek out followers. But for the United States, multilateralism is a tool to be used when it can support the achievement of American interests. As Ambassador to the U.N. Madeleine Albright told a Senate Committee, “When threats arise, we may respond through the U.N., through NATO, through a coalition, through a combination of these tools or we may act alone. We will do whatever is necessary to defend the vital interests of the United States.”³¹

For Canada, acting alone is rarely an option, and therefore multilateralism has always been viewed as a necessary means to achieve broad foreign policy objectives. Under the current government, the prime Canadian interest abroad is economic, to promote trade and multilateral regimes favorable to its vulnerable, open economy. As one moves away from concrete matters of dollars and cents, Canadian internationalism tends to be an amorphous amalgam of vague concepts which simply equate Canada's well-being with broad global stability and unabashed claims that Canadians have certain virtues that make them especially well qualified to promote that stability. As a recent parliamentary review of foreign policy

concluded:

foreign policy matters to Canadians. They have deep-rooted values that they carry over into the role they want Canada to play—nurturing dialogue and compromise; promoting democracy, human rights, economic and social justice; caring for the environment; safeguarding peace; and easing poverty. And they can offer corresponding skills—mediating disputes; counselling, good governance in a diverse society; helping the less fortunate; and peacekeeping.³²

What this approach often obscures is the reality that most cases of regional conflict or instability will not even indirectly affect Canadian economic or security interests. Ottawa is often simply looking to participate actively in global affairs. Lacking any solid basis in vital national security interests, Canada does not see a commitment to multilateralism as requiring it to assume a greater share of the military burden for regional security, especially where this could entail high-intensity conflict as part of a coalition. The limited Canadian involvement in the Gulf War, though fully supportive of the U.S.-led coalition, reflected Ottawa's modest assessment of what Canada could be expected to contribute.³³ Ottawa may still believe that Washington is "bound to lead," but it does not always hold that it is necessarily bound to follow.

Canada is showing a new interest in the countries of the Far East and those of Latin America. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's most publicized trade missions have been to these two areas.³⁴ Ottawa believes that as Canada seeks out new trading opportunities, there should be some commensurate augmentation in military links with regions and countries outside the traditional North Atlantic triangle. The 1994 White Paper reflects this state of affairs. It documents how Canadian interest in the security of the Asia Pacific region has become much more active—through the encouragement of regional security dialogues such as the Asia Regional Forum, the Council for Security Cooperation in Asia Pacific, and the Canadian Consortium on Asia Pacific Security. Canada will expand the current program of bilateral military contacts with a variety of Asian nations, including Japan, South Korea, and members of the Association of South East Asian Nations.³⁵

Increased Canadian military ties in Latin America, the Pacific and elsewhere might involve some cooperation with the United States. But this new interest cannot be equated with a Canadian commitment to the security of these regions, a commitment necessitating greatly expanded military operations. Thus it is unlikely that beyond staff talks, exchanges of information, and the occasional port visit and participation in joint exercises, Canada is prepared to bind itself to concrete regional security arrangements. The emphasis upon naval ties is noteworthy since they are a relatively inexpensive way to maintain a nominal "global" presence. Just because forces exercise together does not mean they will fight together. Indeed, the attractiveness of these new links seems to rest for the most part in

their relatively low political, and above all financial, costs. Canada, it may be said, is more interested in "conference"—as opposed to military-backed confidence-building measures.

In short, the key motivating factor behind expanding military ties is economic considerations, not those of traditional military security. Recently a high-level Canadian military delegation went to China to establish contacts with the Peoples Liberation Army and to explore opportunities for military exports.³⁶ A cruise by Canada's newest warship into the Persian Gulf was likewise intended to promote Canadian defense products. To this extent, Ottawa and Washington might well find themselves in a competitive rather than cooperative situation overseas.

For the United States, Canada's shallow commitment to regional security and any future war-fighting coalitions is of little import—even less than in the cold war when some political symbolism was attached to Canadian diplomatic support. The U.S. military knows full well that the Canadian forces lack the capabilities to make a significant military contribution out of area. Moreover, for the United States, promoting regional security will depend upon the cooperation with regional powers and, at times, powerful external actors such France, Britain, and even Russia. If Washington cannot get these other nations to follow its lead, then it will either act alone, if its vital interests are deemed to be at stake, or it will not act at all.

With NORAD, NATO, and ad-hoc coalitions waning in importance for Canada, U.N. peacekeeping has emerged, for the first time, as the de facto top priority in Canadian defense policy. And, as Dennis Stairs of Dalhousie University has observed, the 1994 parliamentary reviews of defense and foreign policy "established beyond any doubt that there was massive support in the country at large" for peacekeeping.³⁷ Thus even as Ottawa was pulling its troops out of Yugoslavia, and hedging on whether to participate in NATO's peace enforcement efforts there, the government was launching new foreign and defense policy initiatives designed to strengthen the U.N.'s peacekeeping capabilities and to augment Canada's contribution to them. In early September 1995, Mr. Collenette announced that as many as 3,000 additional members of the CF would be available for peacekeeping operations, putting the total number at more than 20,000 out of combined armed forces of soon-to-be 60,000. He also stressed that the U.N., rather than NATO, "should take the lead in setting the broad context for all security initiatives and in giving direction for multilateral operations."³⁸

Later that month, Canada tabled a report at the U.N. entitled *Towards A Rapid Reaction Capability For the United Nations*.³⁹ Based upon the idea of the "Vanguard Concept," the report called for nations to maintain an enhanced multinational standby force of up to 5,000 troops to be assembled and deployed on short notice under the operational control of small permanent operational headquarters unit of 30-50 civilian experts. This force would "buy time for diplomatic efforts and prepare the ground work for a longer-term traditional peacekeeping operation." The report also contained proposals for other improvements to the U.N.'s approach to crisis

management in the area of early warning and logistics.⁴⁰ "This report," Mr. Collenette stated, "illustrates the Government's commitment to ensuring a vigorous and effective United Nations at a time of increased demand for peacekeeping."⁴¹

In the early post-cold war years, Canada-U.S. compatibility in peacekeeping seemed to grow and hold greater potential as the Bush administration embraced U.N. peacekeeping as a useful tool. Between 1988 and 1993, some twenty new operations were begun which Canada participating in nearly all of them and with considerable American diplomatic, logistic, and financial support.⁴² The U.S. military began incorporating peacekeeping in its doctrine and training.⁴³ The "Canadianization" of American defense policy seemed to be at hand.

But rather than heralding the beginning of new phase in bilateral relations, the proliferation of peacekeeping in the early 1990s now appears as a false start in efforts to order the new world disorder. After some early successes, it began to turn sour in Somalia and finally collapsed in the Yugoslavian nightmare. During 1995, the United States paid US\$407 million, based on a total peacekeeping assessment of just over US\$1 billion, a 59 percent drop in expected contributions, meaning that the United States was covering only about 12 percent of U.N. peacekeeping costs. By the end of 1995, the United States owed US\$817 million.⁴⁴ As President Clinton has acknowledged, the United States has become "the biggest piker in the U.N."⁴⁵ To many it seems that peacekeeping had become "unAmerican."

Under attack at home by Republicans who included criticism of peacekeeping in the Contract With America, in May 1994 the Clinton administration issued Presidential Decision Directive 25, (PDD-25), U.S. Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations which tempered the earlier enthusiasm and placed limits and conditions on future U.S. involvement in U.N. peacekeeping operations.⁴⁶ The PDD-25 approach was evident in Bosnia and Rwanda.

It is not that Washington wants the U.N. to get out of the peacekeeping business, but rather that, as many of these operations cross the line between classic peacekeeping and peace enforcement, the United States will insist upon its own methods of making the U.N. more "vigorous and effective." This might entail entirely removing operations from the U.N., which, according to Ambassador Albright, "has not shown a capacity to respond decisively when the risk of combat is high" and when "military credibility is what is required" to keep the peace.⁴⁷

Thus, as it assumed the leadership role in Yugoslavia in the summer of 1995, Washington was determined not to repeat the mistakes of the United Nations Protection Force. In making his case for the dispatch of U.S. troops to Bosnia as part of the NATO mission, President Clinton assured the American people that "unlike the U.N. (United Nations) forces" they would have the "authority to respond immediately" to attacks. "America," he warned, "protects its own. Anyone—anyone—who takes on our troops will suffer the consequences. We will fight fire with fire, and then some."⁴⁸ Testifying before a U.S. Senate Committee, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General John

Shalikashvilli stressed that any force sent into Bosnia had to be sized "sufficiently large so when they have to go in they are robust enough to take care of themselves." He added that he wanted to ensure the force was not "pushed around" the way the U.S. troops had been."⁴⁹ For many Americans, peacekeeping, as it has been practiced by the United Nations in Bosnia and elsewhere has been "discredited."⁵⁰ Put more bluntly by *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer, "peacekeeping is for chumps."⁵¹

For Canadians, whose troops have bravely, honorably, and usefully served in the former Yugoslavia for the last three years, these may appear to be inaccurate and indeed unfair assessments. Nevertheless, the more the U.N.'s velvet glove takes advantage of NATO's iron fist, there is little doubt whose hand holds the leash on what Defense Secretary William Perry assured Congress would be "the biggest, toughest, the meanest dog in town"⁵² U.N. operations which are contracted out to American-led coalitions because they hold the potential for high intensity combat will increasingly be beyond Canada's capacity, both militarily and politically.

Recent trends and changes in peacekeeping also appear to be having an impact on Canadian conduct, and not only in the case of Bosnia. Despite its decision to augment available forces for peacekeeping and the proposal for a new U.N. "vanguard force," the Chrétien government has moved away from the activism of the Mulroney years. At the end of 1993, Canada had nearly 5,000 peacekeepers in U.N. operations. With the end of the U.N. operation in Yugoslavia, Canada had only 900 peacekeepers, nearly all in two U.N. operations, one on the Golan heights, which dates back to 1974, and one in Haiti.⁵³ In December 1995, the Security Council unanimously decided to renew the U.N. mission in Rwanda but to reduce the size of the force. Canada complained that this would make it virtually impossible to fulfill the mandate and threatened to withdraw its troops.⁵⁴ Unable to change the Council's policy, in January 1996, Ottawa announced the early withdrawal of the remaining 199 Canadians from the Rwanda mission.⁵⁵

Still, there remains a role for classic peacekeeping, and this is where Canada, with declining yet highly skilled forces, can continue to make a contribution to regional stability. The Canadians can be part of more lightly armed U.N. troops which go into areas where all parties consent to the deployment or where prior American intervention has eliminated opposition by force and insured that there is a peace to keep.

This is the case in Haiti today. At the same time as Ottawa announced its withdrawal from Rwanda, it was responding positively to a request from Washington that Canada assume command and increase the Canadian contingent as U.S. forces withdraw. In this instance, in contrast to Rwanda, the U.N. mission peacekeeping mission serves U.S. interests and thus Ottawa has been assured by Washington that the resources will be available to implement the mandate.⁵⁶ When, however, China threatened to veto the force in the Security Council unless it reduced the size of the force from 1,900 troops and 300 police officers to 1,200, Canada offered to dispatch and pay for an additional 700 troops who will not be formally under U.N. command.

This saved the mission.⁵⁷

Problems could arise between Ottawa and Washington, however, under the "two-tracked" U.S. approach. American forces will go into trouble spots with sufficient power to temporarily impose a peace, then hand a still volatile and unresolved situation over to the traditional U.N. peacekeeping forces who will again lack adequate resources and mandates to maintain the peace. This may well be the situation in Haiti, despite assurances, and in Bosnia when the deadline set by President Clinton expires.

Any major reform of peacekeeping, whether American ground forces participate in specific operations or not, will require U.S. backing as Washington makes major change in New York a condition of its continued support for peacekeeping. A new U.N. operational headquarters and a rapid reaction capability, along the lines Canada has proposed, is supported by the United States. The Clinton administration has notified the U.N. that while it would not " earmark' specific forces or units," it would provide "a listing of capabilities potentially available for peace operations." These include strategic airlift and sealift, logistics, communications support, intelligence support, and personnel for headquarters staff functions.⁵⁸

While Washington will no doubt encourage Canada to sustain its interest in peacekeeping, many other countries can now be called upon to contribute, including former Warsaw Pact nations and former Soviet republics whose participation will carry more political significance for the United States than Canada's. Indeed, the Clinton

administration has encouraged PfP nations to train for peacekeeping operations and in October 1995, U.S. and Russian troops held a joint peacekeeping exercise in the United States.

In an ironic twist, what has happened is not the Canadianization of American defense policy but the Americanization of peacekeeping in a manner that may well deprive Ottawa of the opportunity of using this activity to cut a distinct (unAmerican) international figure. In the long run, trends in both U.S. and Canadian policy suggest that Canada-U.S. collaboration in multilateral peacekeeping, while continuing, will be more limited than previously anticipated.

Conclusion

There is no need to regret the end of much of the Canadian-U.S. defense relationship. After all, it is the result of victory in the cold war—a victory which amply justified the close collaboration of those decades. Moreover, the decline of this relationship will have benefits for both countries and a positive impact on any future military collaboration.

The dream of the anti-American English Canadian nationalist has come true: Canada is no longer “partner to behemoth” or “powder monkey” on the American national security ship of state. For Canadians and the Ottawa government, it means that they need fear no more “annihilation without representation” or agonize over the threat to their independence and sovereignty as a result of very close military collaboration with the United States. Canada will still live in the shadow of the United States, now the world's sole superpower, but Canada and the United States will be free to conduct bilateral military relations in a way that more clearly reflects the enormous disparity in military power, international status, and global responsibilities between the two.

The benefit of all this is that frictions which have arisen in the bilateral relationship because of Canadian sovereignty concerns over defense issues will wane. They will only arise again if Ottawa itself chooses to become more heavily involved in American-led activities, whether in North America through an accelerated NORAD BMD role, in Europe through NATO actions in the East, or out of area through participation in coalitions and U.S.-backed U.N. peace enforcement efforts.

What is coming to an end is the cooperation between Canada and the United States in the defense of the West, not all military links between the two countries. These will continue in a scaled-back NORAD, in Europe through minimal Alliance ties, and at the U.N. through participation in classic peacekeeping. Ottawa will no doubt wish to sustain these links for the sake of Canada's international standing as a G-7 nation, as part of the Canadian identity and self-perception, and for the sake of maintaining a high degree of professionalism within the Canadian forces. At the same time, given Canada's declining interest in NATO and the tenuous nature of new forms of out of area cooperation, strictly North America security

may, by virtue of simple geography and costs, come to represent Canada's most important military link to with the United States, even as NORAD and other forms of continental ties military fade.⁵⁹

What could bring even this reduced level of bilateral collaboration to a complete end will be Canada's domestic woes, its budgetary crisis, and, above all, the unresolved national unity question. The razor-thin "non" vote in the October 30, 1995, Quebec referendum afforded only a reprieve, not a pardon, for a federal government which badly misjudged the strength of separatism. English Canadians may "love" Quebec, but it remains unclear whether they and their provincial governments are willing to recognize and entrench Quebec's distinctiveness in the Canadian constitution. The final chapter in the Canada-U.S. defense relationship could come about simply because Canada itself may come to an end.

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