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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
CSC 28 / CCEM 28

EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZONS

IS NATO STILL RELEVANT FOR CANADA?

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At the end of the Second World War (WW2), the Soviet Army stood along a line in Eastern Europe from Trieste to Stettin, refusing to disarm. The Western European nations, much weaker than this new menace, turned to the USA for a guarantee of their security as the only power able to do so.¹ The growing paralysis of the United Nations (UN) was already apparent.² Following the Czechoslovak coup in 1948, Canada and Britain increased their efforts to bring the USA into a tripartite discussion in pursuit of a multilateral collective defence organization. The result in April 1949 was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an Alliance that would counter the Communist expansionist threat – known as the Cold War – and shape a bi-polar world for the next 40 years.

In 1989 that world changed unexpectedly with the destruction of the Berlin Wall, as East and West Germany became one nation again. Across Central and Eastern Europe former Warsaw Pact nations rapidly cast off their Soviet yoke and began a path towards a new Europe. Within two years the Soviet Union itself collapsed following a failed coup in Moscow. The bi-polar world of Soviet-dominated communist expansionism versus the American-led Alliance of western democracies had suddenly disappeared. The Cold War had been won and no one had seen it coming.

At that point, many expected NATO to declare victory and fade away along with the *raison d'être* for its existence:

The immediate visceral reaction in NATO was that its days were numbered. After all, with a new world order dawning, the security structures of the past hardly seemed appropriate. Sober second thoughts soon took hold, however, as the realization sunk in that

¹ A.W. DePorte, "The Past as Prologue," Stanley R. Sloan, ed., NATO in the 1990s (New York: Pergamon-Brassey, 1989) 43.

² David G. Haglund, "Canada and an Atlantic Alliance: An Introduction and Overview," What NATO for Canada? (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, 2000) 2.

the world was moving into a major period of transition that would be fraught with risks.³

It was quickly recognized that change is not irreversible nor is forecasting future threats an exact science, as witnessed by the unforeseen shock of first German unification, then the rapid demise of the Warsaw Pact, followed by the USSR in the space of three years. It can be argued that the Cold War truly ended with the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 when Russia declared its support for the American-led war against that terrorism. Notwithstanding, Russia remains a nuclear power with an uncertain political and economic future. The end state for the Balkans is not yet known. The Middle East is in turmoil. India-Pakistan tensions remain. The war in Afghanistan continues, as does the struggle against terrorism. In that kind of world a unique military alliance such as NATO may play a key role in the interests of expanding regional – and global – security.

There has been considerable debate about the continued relevance of NATO. In fact, questions about its purpose and means have always been with NATO, even during the darkest days of the Cold War. The discussions within Canada about its role in the Alliance and the utility of NATO for Canada have had equal longevity, but have intensified since 1992. Is NATO still relevant to Canadian security? NATO is a collective of individual states with shared democratic values and a common interest in political and economic stability that includes all partners in decision-making. That shared history as a community transcends its original mainly military purpose. This paper will prove that the Alliance is as relevant to Canada today as it was when Canada helped found NATO.

³ John Woodworth, "NATO's Prospects," Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., NATO and the Changing World Order (New York: Univ Press of America, 1996) 203.

To demonstrate the continued relevance of NATO to Canada, this paper first must review the history of NATO as both a military and political collective security organization and then its successful transformation after 1992 into a predominantly political alliance still relevant to its members. Having reviewed NATO's evolution, this paper then will examine Canada's foreign policy evolution vis-à-vis NATO. It will do so by reviewing the political goals pursued by Canada within NATO in order to ensure that Canada would have a voice in world affairs to influence their impact on Canadians. That analysis will include the evolution of Canadian foreign policy in terms of Canada's history and geopolitical situation leading to its NATO membership. Finally this paper will review current Canadian foreign policy and how the revitalized NATO continues to complement those policy objectives in the context of Canada's desired influence in world affairs.

The analysis begins in the aftermath of WW2 with the Iron Curtain descending on Central and Eastern Europe. The need for post-Second World War European collective security preceded NATO, first with the French–British Treaty of Dunkirk in 1947, then the Treaty of Brussels in 1948,⁴ both prompted by the Soviet disinclination to disarm and retreat from Central Europe. The next step was the creation of NATO on 4 April 1949 to keep the USA involved in Europe:

Two fundamental reasons led Western nations after World War II to sign the North Atlantic Treaty and subsequently develop the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The first was to provide a political and military counterbalance to the power of the Soviet Union in Europe. The second was to create a structure within which the nations of Western Europe and their North

⁴ Pierre Lellouche, "Rebuild or Decay: The Future of the European Security System (A French Perspective)," Stanley R. Sloan, ed., NATO in the 1990s (New York: Pergamon-Brassey, 1989) 237.

American allies – the United States and Canada – could promote peaceful and productive relationships among themselves, bringing to an end the cycles of internal conflict that had produced two world wars in the twentieth century.⁵

Prior to WW2 both the USA and Canada had retreated from Europe in hopes of avoiding just such a second conflict. That failure of isolationist policy left both nations concluding that their security was inextricably tied to that of Western Europe, if they were to prevent future conflicts.⁶ American interests in guaranteeing Western European security were threefold: maintaining the Western European democracies to counter the influence and expansionism of the Soviet Union; preserving Western Europe as a “fully contributing, fully developed partner in an international economic system that the United States believed crucial for its own continued existence;”⁷ and making a moral commitment to democratic values not only in Europe, but around the world. The Americans never expected to remain in Europe for 40 years; they intended to rebuild a Europe that could defend itself and, hence, emphasized the military value of the Alliance as an essential element for containing communist aggression globally.⁸ That policy of containment stretched NATO regional security to global security against nuclear war.⁹ Tensions were highest in 1962 with the Cuban missile crisis. The threat persisted, however, for another 30 years, resulting in the persistence of NATO. As late as 1987 the focus remained on

⁵ Stanley R. Sloan, ed., NATO in the 1990s (New York: Pergamon-Brassey, 1989) 9.

⁶ Haglund 5.

⁷ Catherine McArdle Kelleher, “The United States and NATO: Enduring Interests and Negotiable Bargains,” Stanley R. Sloan, ed., NATO in the 1990s (New York: Pergamon-Brassey, 1989) 81.

⁸ James Rentschler, “American Priorities and the European Connection,” Nils Orvik, ed., NATO Priorities (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, 1981) 23.

⁹ Nils Orvik, “Conclusion: The Years Ahead,” NATO Priorities (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, 1981) 50.

deterrence against Soviet aggression. When the conventional threat collapsed, the principal rationale for NATO was gone.

What survived was the communal spirit of cooperation that had evolved during those 40 years:

NATO has always been based on more than a reaction to an external threat. It has always been a community of Western values aimed at laying a security foundation that would allow democracy, a market economy, and cooperative diplomacy to take hold.... Mainly because of this role, the governments of the alliance do want to keep NATO alive. They also value it, however, as an insurance policy against an uncertain and turbulent future.¹⁰

From the outset Canada pursued Atlanticism to avoid a Europe versus North America polarization of the Alliance.¹¹ Canada wanted NATO to be a community of equals:

This goal included the integration of West Germany into the Western community and the transcending of authoritarian vestiges from both the Left and Right in Italy, Turkey, Greece, Portugal and Spain. NATO was remarkably successful in this endeavor. What also happened on the way to this happy result was a profound maturing of habits of cooperation that became the hallmark of the West's strength.... In effect, what began as a threat-based organization has today become a value-based organization.¹²

That dual role of military and political cooperation is critical to understanding the continued value of NATO today to Canada and all members. Its importance was recognized even during the Cold War:

¹⁰ Richard L. Kugler, "Is NATO Obsolete?" Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., NATO and the Changing World Order (New York: Univ Press of America, 1996) 80.

¹¹ John English, "Problems in Middle Life," Margaret O. MacMillan and David S. Sorenson, ed., Canada and NATO: Uneasy Past, Uncertain Future (Waterloo: Univ of Waterloo Press, 1990), 56.

¹² Woodworth 205-6.

NATO has developed an important new concept of stability, which depends as much on political as on military means. Hence, the Alliance's two-track policy of defence/deterrence and dialogue/détente, and the importance of its role in the management of East-West relations. . . . This has been no mean feat, and stands in contrast to the situation before World War I, when there was too much defence and not enough dialogue, and before World War II, where there was too much dialogue and not enough defence.¹³

Canada always placed the greatest emphasis upon the idea of an Atlantic community of like-minded nations. NATO, in Prime Minister Louis St Laurent's eyes, was to be an extension of the UN, a link that was important to Canada. In a speech to Parliament on 29 April 1948 he called for:

the creation of an association of all free states in the West, linking North America with the five signatories . . . of the Brussels Treaty of 17 March 1948. "Why not," he suggested, "transform that new arrangement into a North Atlantic collective-defence mechanism that would not transcend the United Nations, but would instead be fully compatible with the charter's provisions for regional self-defence under article 51?"¹⁴

Canada was a leading proponent of the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington on 4 April 1949. It was Canada that insisted upon including Article 2:

Canada's spokesmen were dominant in the creation of NATO in 1949 and were among the first to enunciate the 'North Atlantic Idea' together with the recognition that the alliance concern itself with non-military activities. Article 2 became the embodiment of these ideas and as such, was suitably termed the 'Canadian article'. Canadian diplomatic efforts for its inclusion in the Treaty were greatly aided by the consensus within the country with respect to these new directions in Canadian foreign policy. Canadians have a traditional prejudice which mitigates against military alliances, and Pearson continually emphasized the economic, cultural and spiritual aspects of the alliance for purposes of domestic

¹³ John Halstead, "Canada and NATO Looking to the 90's," Margaret O. MacMillan and David S. Sorenson, ed., Canada and NATO: Uneasy Past, Uncertain Future (Waterloo: Univ of Waterloo Press, 1990), 143.

¹⁴ David G. Haglund, "Canada and an Atlantic Alliance: An Introduction and Overview," What NATO for Canada? (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, 2000) 3.

consumption, especially in Quebec with its hostility towards past conscription policies of the government.¹⁵

The 'Canadian Article' reads as follows:

The Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them.¹⁶

A Canadian analyst noted in 1980, "it is this Article that has become the dominant element in the Alliance. After all, political cooperation is essentially being nice to one another between countries.... NATO has become the major western political consultative forum and there is no limit to the subjects it discusses...."¹⁷

What is the significance of the Canadian Article to NATO's continued relevance?

Threats to stability have always been not just military, but political and economic, as well.¹⁸

That recognition was behind the impetus to rebuild Europe after WW2 both to make military spending affordable and to provide a better alternative to communism, thereby addressing not only third world unrest, but also the turbulence that existed within Western Europe. Although

¹⁵ Marilyn D. Eustace, Canada's Participation in Political NATO (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, 1976) 6.

¹⁶ NATO Website accessed 2 Mar 02 at <http://www.nato.int/docu/ext-sec/q-what.htm>

¹⁷ D.C. Arnould, "Defending Europe: Where and How?" Nils Orvik, ed. Canada and NATO (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, 1982) 83-84.

¹⁸ Joseph Sinasac, "The Three Wise Men: The Effects of the 1956 Committee of Three on NATO," Margaret O. MacMillan and David S. Sorenson, ed., Canada and NATO: Uneasy Past, Uncertain Future (Waterloo: Univ of Waterloo Press, 1990), 34.

NATO has no actual economic functions, it was recognized early that internal stability would depend upon a sound economy. As well, a number of international economic systems developed in parallel to NATO, including the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The USA was the “main architect of this system.”¹⁹ Interestingly the same members belonged to the various organizations, reflecting their shared values and resulting in dealings in one arena affecting dealings in another; NATO members comprise six of the seven Group of Seven (G7) seats, 16 of 22 members of the IMF, and three of the five permanent seats in the United Nations.²⁰ Hence, despite a decided lack of interest initially in Article 2 outside of Canada, the political aspect did evolve, providing a unique basis upon which to transform NATO from a largely defence-oriented security organization into a predominantly political entity ready to address the post-Cold War instability in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as out of area.

NATO’s transformation began with the necessity of addressing the instability caused by the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. NATO created the Partners for Peace (PfP) program as a means for those nations to prepare themselves for potential NATO membership, shifting the Alliance from a largely military to a more political organization. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) also was introduced as a forum for furthering the same end and for resolving any security concerns among these former adversaries, including Russia. NATO’s relevance also has

¹⁹ A.W. DePorte, “The First Forty Years,” Stanley R. Sloan, ed., NATO in the 1990s (New York: Pergamon-Brassey, 1989) 71.

²⁰ Manfred Worner, “A New NATO for a New Era,” Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., NATO and the Changing World Order (New York: Univ Press of America, 1996) xi.

been demonstrated by the ongoing unrest in the Balkans and the resulting sense that the world and, indeed Europe, is far from a safe place.²¹ European stability remains a key NATO concern:

Why does NATO have to address it? you may ask. Who cares about Central and Eastern Europe? First of all, the Europeans care. The Western Europeans care because that region is the source of disorder and ethnic hostility, which is bound to spill over into the NATO region. The United States and Canada care about this region because, historically, we have never succeeded in isolating ourselves from the security threats to Europe.²²

NATO needs to expand to fill the power vacuum in Central Europe and avoid the development of multi-layered and inherently destabilizing European alliances all too familiar in the past. Of particular note, most East Europeans are actively seeking NATO membership both to hasten their entry into the West European system and to prevent renationalising their defence and, hence, to reduce the risk of future European wars with one another.²³ Instability within the former Warsaw Pact, however, is but one concern.

In arguing for the continuing value of NATO, one author declared, “the most important intra-alliance function is that of reassurance. The continued existence of NATO, including its integrated military structure and the U.S. military presence in Europe, assures alliance members that they have nothing to fear from one another.”²⁴ Some truth remains in the expression that NATO was designed to keep the Russians out, the Americans in and the Germans down:

²¹ Haglund 9.

²² David C. Acheson, “The Future of NATO,” Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., NATO and the Changing World Order (New York: Univ Press of America, 1996) 182.

²³ Colonel S. Nelson Drew, USAF, “Post-Cold War American Leadership,” Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., NATO and the Changing World Order (New York: Univ Press of America, 1996) 13.

²⁴ John S. Duffield, “Why NATO Persists,” Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., NATO and the Changing World Order (New York: Univ Press of America, 1996) 105-6.

The stunning new fact of German reunification not only frightens many in both eastern and western Europe, (not to mention North America) but may pose new challenges to Western European unification. To the extent that the Federal Republic remains fully integrated in the western military alliance, these fears can be mitigated.²⁵

In addition to European security, NATO offers the UN a viable means of addressing instability in other areas. One of the reasons Canada could play a UN peacekeeping role was that the USA and USSR could not; in the post-Cold War era, this situation has changed radically as has the nature of peacekeeping.²⁶ The current emphasis on more aggressive peace enforcement requires a more robust force posture such as NATO can provide. In fact, in recognizing UN failures during the 1990s, a recent panel of experts recommended to the Secretary-General the development of “larger, more technologically sophisticated and readily available UN forces able to intervene quickly and to take sides in conflicts.”²⁷ It is unlikely that the UN could find the resources to fund such a force. Such action requires American and NATO assistance; military credibility requires standing coalitions. NATO is just such a coalition with the resident infrastructure, procedures and training to function as a practical tool. An expansion of NATO would improve the effectiveness of that capability by broadening the interoperability and training base.²⁸ NATO could provide an effective instrument to the UN to address its shortfalls, marrying UN legitimacy, essential to many countries including Canada, with a potent operational capability.

²⁵ Joseph T. Jockel, “U.S. Interests and Canadian Defence Policy in the 1990s: New Epoch, New Era; Old Agenda,” Margaret O. MacMillan and David S. Sorenson, ed., Canada and NATO: Uneasy Past, Uncertain Future (Waterloo: Univ of Waterloo Press, 1990), 103.

²⁶ Joseph T. Jockel, “Canada in the Post-Cold War World,” Canada and NATO: The Forgotten Ally? (Cambridge: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1992) 70.

²⁷ Joel J. Sokolsky, “Over There with Uncle Sam: Peacekeeping, the ‘Trans-European Bargain,’ and the Canadian Forces,” What NATO for Canada? (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, 2000) 19.

The argument against this NATO peacekeeping role targets its consensus-based decision process. NATO must rely on coalitions of the willing.²⁹ Some of the difficulties were highlighted during the Kosovo campaign and are anticipated by many to become worse with membership expansion. What is seen by some to be a weakness, however, was long considered a key strength by others; NATO always has been a collective of individual nations deciding by consensus. That very process of all having a vote facilitates agreement: “When performance depends on consensus, which often means accepting the level of the lowest common denominator, there can be no loud talk or slamming of doors.”³⁰ Its diplomatic skill is cited as the reason for the success of NATO to date. Although some are sceptical that NATO will ever act with unanimous participation, the Alliance has adapted by developing the Combined Joint Task Force concept in order to permit out-of-area action by willing members; its members recognized the need to move beyond consensus even before expansion.³¹ NATO solidarity was clear after the 11 September attacks in its unanimous invocation of Article 5 for the first time in its history. In addition, NATO resources already have been used for coalition missions in the Gulf War and Afghanistan. Gulf War forces were comprised primarily of NATO member forces that had experience working together, with similar training, doctrine, organization, and the

²⁸ Haglund 11.

²⁹ James Chace, “Is NATO Obsolete?” Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., NATO and the Changing World Order (New York: Univ Press of America, 1996) 62.

³⁰ Nils Orvik, ed., NATO Priorities (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, 1981) iii.

³¹ S. Neil MacFarlane, “Canada and the ‘European Pillar’ of Defence,” What NATO for Canada? (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, 2000) 60.

capability to work effectively in a coalition.³² This shift from consensus to coalitions of the willing signifies a major step in increasing NATO flexibility.

That flexibility has enabled NATO to survive the Cold War with renewed purpose. NATO provides continued and expanding stability throughout Europe by emphasizing its political nature and may evolve further in exporting collective security as a legitimate arm of the UN through its unique military capabilities. NATO has always had concerns and disagreements about its role even at the height of the Cold War; whether the tensions that have always plagued the Alliance will allow it to endure indefinitely will remain the subject of debate. Notwithstanding, the ongoing discussion about NATO evolving into an organization chiefly focused upon political, economic and cultural ties echoes the Canadian insistence from the beginning that those elements be included via Article 2.³³ With NATO now consciously pursuing that Canadian objective, what is certain is that as long as NATO does persist, Canada will be a member. To understand why, one must first understand the evolution of Canadian foreign policy, including the historical influences and geopolitical factors that shaped that policy.

Canada is a unique nation. For most of the twentieth century Canada was a European nation on the North American continent. Its fundamental ties to its two founding nations remain embedded in its psyche. When President De Gaulle withdrew France militarily from NATO on 11 March 1966, he told Canada to vacate its bases promptly. “[Prime Minister] Pearson spoke for many others when he asked ‘a high ranking French public servant’ whether he thought ‘we

³² General John R. Galvin (former SACEUR), “Structures and Security in Europe,” Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., NATO and the Changing World Order (New York: Univ Press of America, 1996) 32.

³³ Margaret O. MacMillan and David S. Sorenson, ed., Canada and NATO: Uneasy Past, Uncertain Future (Waterloo: Univ of Waterloo Press, 1990), iv.

should take our hundred thousand dead with us to Germany.’’³⁴ Pearson’s comment reflected Canadian bitterness at the French action, given Canada’s past commitment to Europe’s freedom, but also underlined a deep sense of Canada’s European roots that had led to making those sacrifices. The historic relationship with Canada’s two founding nations is increasingly challenged, however, by its changing demographics due to immigration patterns and the emotional ties that those new Canadians retain with their countries of origin.³⁵ Its trade patterns also are changing. One of the traditional priorities of a country’s foreign policy is to protect its sovereignty and territory; Canada’s challenge is its great dependence on foreign trade.³⁶ Although heavily dependent on the USA, its decreasing European trade and growing commercial trade with the Pacific region also is having an influence on the public mood, creating an increasingly complex environment for setting foreign policy.³⁷

Four main factors drove that foreign policy during the twentieth century: the special relationship with the USA; membership in the Commonwealth; the commitment to Atlantic defence, and the quest for middle power leadership in the UN. What these four factors have in common is the Canadian desire to offset the influence of bilateral relations with its dominant southern neighbour through multilateral dealings in the other three areas. Each of these factors will emerge and interrelate in reviewing the evolution of Canadian foreign policy.

³⁴ English 54.

³⁵ Canada and the World, DFAIT Website accessed 21 Mar 02 at <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/foreignp/cnd-world.htm>

³⁶ Eustace 4.

³⁷ Geoffrey Pearson, “Canada, NATO and the Public Mood,” Margaret O. MacMillan and David S. Sorenson, ed., Canada and NATO: Uneasy Past, Uncertain Future (Waterloo: Univ of Waterloo Press, 1990), 125.

Until the end of the First World War (WW1) Canada had no say in its foreign policy. From its creation Canada has been dependent upon the protection of a great power. The first guarantor was Britain, followed by the USA through WW2. Canadians realized:

that their defense would be handled by a power outside the boundaries of the country itself. There was no need to fret about the provision of a proper Canadian defense policy and posture. The policy would be simply to rely on others for comprehensive defense while the practical posture would be to provide the absolute minimum acceptable to others which, if nothing else, allowed Canada to retain a modicum of self-respect.”³⁸

The slaughter of WW1, however, left Canada determined to direct its own foreign policy. A seat in the Imperial War Cabinet in 1917 was the result and a separate signature by Canada on the Treaty of Versailles.³⁹ Between wars Canadian foreign policy emerged via its seat in the League of Nations that it must have a say in world affairs and that international institutions provided the greatest opportunity for that voice to be heard. Its role changed dramatically after WW2 thanks to the significant forces at its disposal and to its intact, booming economy.

That second experience of global conflict altered Canadian’s views on their international role. They were determined that the European mistakes of the past not be repeated and that aggression must be confronted firmly. The fate of the world should not be left to the great powers. Canada channelled its efforts towards the UN and NATO, seeking to balance security with its desire for a more prominent place within international organizations in fostering security and peace, maintaining sovereignty over its large land mass and extensive waters with its small and largely anti-defence spending population, making its voice heard post WW2, and making its

³⁸ Alex Morrison, “Canadian Defense Policy and Burden-Sharing in NATO,” Canada and NATO: The Forgotten Ally? (Cambridge: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1992) 34.

³⁹ Jockel, “Canada in the Post-Cold War World,” 58.

voice heard in the presence of the enormous influence of the USA.⁴⁰ Canada's evolving foreign policy was linked directly to its unique geography.

Canada's geography, and particularly her proximity to the USA, shaped her politics. Canada has half the population and 40 times the territory of Britain, including coastlines on three oceans and an unforgiving Arctic.⁴¹ Her geography provides a formidable challenge in terms of domestic sovereignty and surveillance:

The problem was threefold. First, how could Canada – the second largest country in the world, the country with the world's longest coastline bordering on three oceans, a country with a truly admirable war record but with no desire to maintain large forces in being, a country with a very small population relative to its landmass, a country with actual and potential internal political tensions – provide for its own security and defense, and exercise sovereignty over the waters, land and air it claimed as its own?⁴²

Canada had to address these issues, as well as its desire to be a part of a solution to the Europe that had dragged her into two world wars at great cost in treasure and lives, all while minimizing to the greatest extent possible the influence of the USA in its relationship with that nation. That relationship had been growing even as the connection with Britain diminished:

In 1938 the years of suspended animation ended and Canada traded British hegemony for American dominance. In that year the American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt...promised that the United States "would not stand idly by if domination of Canadian soil is threatened by any *other* empire.... "If the Dominion was actually invaded by an aggressive foreign nation, or was in serious danger of such an invasion, the United States would certainly be

⁴⁰ Jockel 59.

⁴¹ David Greenwood, "Defense Burdensharing: European and Canadian Contributions to NATO's Defenses," Stanley R. Sloan, ed., NATO in the 1990s (New York: Pergamon-Brassey, 1989) 186.

⁴² Morrison 37.

forced to act, purely and simply in the interests of its own safety.”⁴³

Soon after, Canada and the USA created the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, binding their security policies together. Hence, Canada shifted from the influence of Britain to that of the USA, to the discomfort of many Canadians. One analyst described that discomfort thus:

But these many affinities, with all the good that they bring, make us feel somewhat uncomfortable at times. It would be so easy to establish a North American common market; a common continental resources policy; even a common currency. But, each of these steps would erode what we see as our national identity, our *raison d’être*, as a sovereign nation.... At the same time, we recognize that in order to preserve our identity there must be other links, other cooperative arrangements. The ties with the European industrialized nations are perhaps the most important alternative to a purely continental policy within North America.⁴⁴

Another is more critical of Canadian identity:

Canada does not have a security problem in the traditional sense of the term; it has an identity problem. It occupies a space that adjoins the largest global economy and the only global power.... It does mean that we are particularly sensitive to having our lives run by the Americans. Canada’s security policy is not a response to threats as much as it is part of an effort to deal with the obvious geographical and cultural fact that maintaining autonomy and flexibility in the face of this friendly and multifaceted embrace is deeply problematical, particularly since our partner shows no sensitivity whatsoever to the problems that its sheer size and power create for us.⁴⁵

Canada’s motivation in pursuing multilateral associations perhaps may stem from an identity crisis. It also can be argued, however, that it derives at least equally from trying to avoid once again finding Canada in a conflict not of its design or choosing and from a consequent

⁴³ Morrison 36.

⁴⁴ Arnould 85.

⁴⁵ MacFarlane 64.

determination to have some role in its own destiny. That policy flows not from a lack of identity, but from the responsibilities inherent in being a sovereign nation. From the experience of two world wars and facing the growing influence of the USA, Canada was seeking some means of control over its own security. At the same time Canadians recognized the fact that “Canada’s national territory and its off-shore areas cannot be defended effectively by Canada’s armed forces.”⁴⁶ The answer lay in collective security primarily through the UN and NATO, allowing Canada to continue multilaterally the sense of security provided previously by membership in the British Empire without being completely reliant on the USA.

The first of these two, the UN, has always been and remains an important part of Canadian foreign policy:

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national psychology not unlike that of the new countries.”⁴⁸ Canada sought a leadership role in the UN as a capable and credible middle power with a reputation for honesty and compromise.⁴⁹ There were trade opportunities to be explored in a new, more stable world. After all, the UN “was founded to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”⁵⁰ That hope was quickly derailed by the Cold War and bi-polarization, giving rise to NATO as a Western alternative.

Canada’s relationship with NATO is an extension of its relationship with Europe and especially Britain, one involving both comfort and pain as witnessed by Canada’s costly participation in two world wars.⁵¹ Until the 1960s Canada had a special association with Britain and strove to avoid conflict between its interactions with Britain and the USA. Canadians saw in NATO not just a military alliance, but:

a means of furthering unity between the three nations, as they saw it, of the North Atlantic triangle. Moreover, Canadians saw in NATO the beginnings of an Atlantic community which would respond to their deepest aspirations as a new world nation with strong old world ties.”⁵²

Canada did not join NATO blindly, but dictated the terms of its membership in order to influence the shape of the post-war world. In fact, Prime Minister Mackenzie King unilaterally declared in December 1945 his intention to withdraw Canadian forces from Europe against British objections, reflecting a definitive split from the “one army and one voice for the empire” policy of the past. It also reflected a rejection of the terms offered by Europe for Canadian participation

⁴⁸ Pearson 127.

⁴⁹ Pearson 127.

⁵⁰ Morrison 37.

⁵¹ Haglund 4.

⁵² Pearson 127.

in the peace.⁵³ The government wanted to avoid future entanglements and believed the best policy would be to have a seat at the table, something the Europeans initially were not prepared to allow; the world still viewed Britain as the spokesman for the Dominions. Canadian determination in engaging Europe on its own terms, however, would lead to its own seat in both the UN and NATO, and Canadian sponsorship of Article 2 of the NATO Charter, followed by a return of Canadian forces to Europe in 1951.⁵⁴

From whence came that determination within what was still a young country with the unflattering label of Dominion? When Prime Minister St. Laurent introduced the proposals for a North Atlantic Alliance in the House of Commons:

[he] emphasized the ‘Canadian line of the Treaty’ which his government believed capable to meet the threat. Not only did the West require an overwhelming preponderance of force but “this force must be not only military; it must be economic; it must be moral.”⁵⁵

His Foreign Minister, Pearson, stated that stability was required for peace to exist and that:

stability is reached when economic conditions are improved, when trade flows freely, when political problems are being solved by consultation among states determined to settle them peacefully. Security is a commodity produced as much – indeed, possibly more – by economic well-being as by military preparedness... We must, therefore, co-operate as effectively to achieve the former as the latter.⁵⁶

⁵³ Mary Halloran, “Canada and the Origins of the Post-War Commitment,” Margaret O. MacMillan and David S. Sorenson, ed., Canada and NATO: Uneasy Past, Uncertain Future (Waterloo: Univ of Waterloo Press, 1990), 1.

⁵⁴ Halloran 3-4.

⁵⁵ Eustace 8.

⁵⁶ Eustace 11.

Bearing in mind that the other NATO members were focused on the military threat and not at all pleased with the Canadian Article merely emphasizes the very different Canadian perception of the importance of the Alliance. Part of the reason for that different view was a public reluctance towards all things military, despite the recent experience of a major war. Canada sold its NATO membership to the public as a fight for freedom:

Our motives related in part to the demands of our domestic community, which would not accept a purely military alliance. Instead, Canadian political leaders promoted the new Alliance as a force for democracy and freedom – a counterattraction to the communism many feared was sweeping the European continent. The political dimension was seen as a means of ensuring that the United States did not return to its prewar [sic] isolationism. Initially article 2 was the neglected article, inserted only to placate a Canada that threatened to refuse to sign the Washington Treaty unless it was there. Canadian faith in the article never wavered [sic], however, and it is worth noting that, over the years, whenever Alliance members felt the credibility of the Alliance was threatened, they found proof of its ongoing relevance in its political dimension.”⁵⁷

That was not an act of cynical salesmanship. Canada had a vision for a new world order to prevent a return of the old:

[Pearson’s] basic ideal for the alliance was the creation of a mood of goodwill and common co-operation which no machinery could formally dictate: “An alliance founded on the fear of aggression and on the need to take defensive action against aggression will disappear when the fear is removed. If our alliance was to endure, it had to have political, social, and economic foundations if we could work these out.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Barbara McDougall, “Canada and NATO, and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council,” Canada and NATO: The Forgotten Ally? (Cambridge: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1992) 4.

⁵⁸ Eustace 16.

The House of Commons Debates reveal “the Canadian position on Article 2 was one deeply embedded in democratic political thought; that one had to remove the underlying causes of conflict – economic discontent – to effect a final peace settlement.”⁵⁹

Canadian motives were not entirely altruistic. Self-interest is at the heart of any foreign policy. As a trading nation with a European identity, Canada wanted to build upon its common bonds to balance its economic activity, which was increasingly north-south.⁶⁰

Constitutional governments, the democratic idea, the freedom of the individual, the way of judging right and wrong in the large affairs of mankind – all these are perceived in very much the same way in Europe and in North America. The practical result of this particular perception and this philosophy is that the North Atlantic area is today the core of world commerce and innovation.... This, in turn, reinforces in a very real way these more intangible links. Thus, when Europe is threatened, there is historically a feeling that our way of life is in danger as well.⁶¹

Underlying any efforts to address the economic plight of less fortunate nations is the requirement for a secure, stable environment. NATO was and is the most viable organization to contribute to that stability.

Having looked at the influences shaping Canadian foreign policy and the pursuit of that policy through membership in the UN and NATO, this paper will now examine the NATO relationship vis-à-vis current Canadian foreign policy. The first question one might ask is: does Canada need NATO to defend it?

⁵⁹ Eustace 6.

⁶⁰ *Canada and the World*, DFAIT Website accessed 21 Mar 02 at <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/foreignp/cnd-world.htm>

⁶¹ Arnould 80.

It is perhaps worthwhile to step back and ask just how relevant the transatlantic commitment is to Canadian security.... In terms of traditional conceptions of security, the answer is: not very. The article 5 'security guarantee' is irrelevant. The one state that might threaten Canada's security is too big for us to do anything about.... There are no obvious physical threats to Canada that NATO might be of any particular utility in addressing. If there were, the US would address them anyway.⁶²

There is no immediate physical threat to Canada. Again, however, one must examine the value of NATO membership in terms of not threat but interests; the former may change but the latter remains relatively constant.⁶³ The future is unpredictable. Like-minded nations congregate and consult not just to meet threats, but to reinforce values and common interests. Consider the criteria for NATO membership by PfP nations:

Two things are asked of them before they will be considered for full membership. First, these countries must show that they are worth defending; they must prove that they have a democracy, are committed to a market economy, and have an unalterable commitment to democratic values and processes.... Second, prospective members must prove that they can contribute to collective defense.⁶⁴

NATO values of democracy, free market and rule of law are the values that Canada holds dear and wants to see expanded to all nations. NATO was and is a natural ally in that regard.

The cooperative security that NATO provides is a centrepiece of Canadian policy in promoting global stability; Canada stresses the "political dimension of international relationships and emphasizes the management and peaceful resolution of differences."⁶⁵ This policy demands

⁶² MacFarlane 63.

⁶³ Orvik, "Doctrines and National Security," 106.

⁶⁴ Joseph J. Kruzel, "Partnership for Peace and the Future of European Security," Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., NATO and the Changing World Order (New York: Univ Press of America, 1996) 32.

⁶⁵ McDougall 10-11.

institution building and support to conflict prevention measures such as peacekeeping. For that reason Canada has been called a joiner of clubs. Beyond NATO and the UN, Canada is a member of the G7 (the key forum for coordination and discussion among the world's leading economic powers), the British Commonwealth, La Francophonie; and the Organization of American States.⁶⁶ Canada will continue to address threats to global stability through international institutions and regional initiatives. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Canada has pursued closer ties with most former Soviet Bloc countries, including a special bilateral relationship with Ukraine. Interestingly these efforts have been paralleled by NATO, again reflecting its continued relevance to Canada.

With the threat of global conflict greatly reduced for the foreseeable future, Canada will continue to participate in international affairs, less from a concern for self-preservation than from a deeply held conception of Canada as a nation that can contribute to the preservation of peace elsewhere.⁶⁷ Canadian foreign policy emphasizes human security. One of its areas of concern is the African continent with its myriad problems.⁶⁸ In order to influence others to share and act on that concern requires influence on the world stage. Influence comes at a price of commitment through visible, measurable actions such as contributing to alliances and coalitions. In addition to NATO, UN peacekeeping, a source of pride among Canadians,⁶⁹ provided the forum in the past. Coalitions became the vogue in the 1990s. Despite a reluctance to increase defence

⁶⁶ Barbara McDougall, Alex Morrison, Kim Richard Nossal, Joseph T. Jockel, Canada and NATO: The Forgotten Ally? (Cambridge: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1992) xii.

⁶⁷ Jockel 69.

⁶⁸ Canada and the World, DFAIT Website accessed 21 Mar 02 at <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/foreignp/cnd-world.htm>

spending, Canada has been more than willing to commit its sons and daughters to operations throughout the 1990s in Europe, Africa and elsewhere, often at the side of its American ally in the new peacekeeping. This change stems in part from UN failure to adapt to the harsher peacekeeping environment where there often is no peace to keep. Whereas the UN was unprepared for this shift to peace enforcement, NATO stood trained and ready to step in, albeit reluctantly at first and after American prodding.⁷⁰ The transformation of NATO to peacekeeper and a means of ending human suffering has made the Alliance even more relevant to Canada, given Canada's human rights agenda. NATO standards also made continued Canadian participation in the more rugged peacekeeping possible:

The significant trends in peacekeeping during the 1990s have highlighted in the post-Cold War era what has been a persistent duality in Canadian foreign and defence policy since the Second World War: the desire to play a more independent and distinct role through the UN *and* a strong instinct to join the US and other traditional allies when unified Western action was being organized. Each element is the result of Ottawa's determination to remain active in international security affairs.⁷¹

Canada's dependence on trade was mentioned. That dependence, the increasing globalization of trade, and emergence of major trade blocks with protectionist pressures ensure that Canada will remain engaged in world affairs to protect its interests.⁷² Canada does not want a world trading system based on three protectionist blocks in Europe, the Far East and North

⁶⁹ Harald von Riekhoff, "Peace-Keeping, Arms Control and Canadian Security," Nils Orvik, ed. Canada and NATO (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, 1982) 24.

⁷⁰ Sokolsky 16.

⁷¹ Sokolsky 20.

⁷² Woodworth 201.

America, impeding its trade ambitions; “Canadians will want to keep the North Atlantic community as tightly knit as possible.”⁷³ NATO economic influence remains important.

One of the arguments against continued NATO membership centres on the influence of the Canadian voice, or rather the lack thereof. In Henry Kissinger’s 1965 analysis of NATO, *The Troubled Partnership*, Canada is not even mentioned.⁷⁴ Withdrawal from Germany in 1994 likely reduced that influence even further.⁷⁵ There is little doubt that the major powers in NATO are first among equals. The degree of Canadian influence in the past and now is arguable. What is not is that Canada would have even less influence from the outside. There also are few options for security organizations outside NATO.⁷⁶ A policy of non-alignment or neutrality is incompatible with the national interests already described.⁷⁷ “For smaller members, NATO represents a diplomatic bargain: the ability at modest cost to be well informed about global developments, contingency planning, and East-West negotiations and the opportunity to inject opinions in time to be relevant.”⁷⁸ It also provides that continued balance against one-sided bilateral dealings with the USA. Hand wringing over homeland defence and sovereignty in the wake of the terrorist attacks is indicative of Canada’s long held and ongoing concerns about domination by the senior partner. NATO, as an alliance of equals, still offers that balance and is the only viable security organization that does so. The National Missile Defence proposal is a US

⁷³ Jockel, “U.S. Interests and Canadian Defence Policy in the 1990s,” 105.

⁷⁴ English 49.

⁷⁵ David S. Sorenson, “Canadian Military Forces in the Federal Republic of Germany,” Margaret O. MacMillan and David S. Sorenson, ed., *Canada and NATO: Uneasy Past, Uncertain Future* (Waterloo: Univ of Waterloo Press, 1990), 71.

⁷⁶ Arnould 81.

⁷⁷ Orvik, “Conclusion: The Years Ahead,” 49.

⁷⁸ English 63.

initiative for continental defence whose unilateral nature “carries some risk of derogating Canadian sovereignty and notably Canada’s control over its own defence.”⁷⁹ That US trend underlines the continued relevance of the Alliance in offsetting US influence. Why remain in NATO? “It should want this because the linkage advances at a reasonable cost a set of interests (including those political interests we might call ‘values’) that Canada wishes to defend and promote.”⁸⁰ NATO offers access to:

the most important forums for the information sharing and consultations in the Western world. An overwhelming majority of Canadians seems to understand that the only sensible defence policy for Canada, given its geopolitical situation, its vast territory and its sparse population, is to do its part in cooperation with like-minded friends and allies to help ensure a benign international environment.⁸¹

Whether or not Canadians understand and are willing to pay the price of doing its part remains arguable, given the political unwillingness to increase defence spending even after the terrorist attacks. Those attacks brutally emphasize that the world remains a dangerous, unstable place.

The world is transiting between an old and a new order; the end state remains uncertain. In times of uncertainty, people and nations seek stability. It has never been an option for Canada to act alone. The government has pursued action through formal organizations across the complete spectrum of international topics from security to communications to environmental protection to humanitarian aid.⁸² Canada will continue to contribute to the newly political

⁷⁹ MacFarlane 53.

⁸⁰ David G. Haglund, “Conclusions and Policy Implications,” What NATO for Canada? (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, 2000) 88.

⁸¹ Halstead 152.

⁸² Jockel, “Canada in the Post-Cold War World,” 72.

NATO as a continuation of a long-standing policy, while equally striving to improve the effectiveness of other international institutions such as the UN.⁸³ Although Canadian influence on the world stage may be small for a given crisis, the voice is still there thanks to its continuing NATO membership.

This paper has demonstrated the continued relevance of NATO to Canada. It has done so by analysing the transformation undertaken by NATO to adapt to the post-Cold War world. NATO has shifted its emphasis from military capability to political will to address the instability in Europe resulting from the collapse of the former Soviet Bloc. That political will is manifesting itself in the outreach of the Alliance through the NACC and PfP programmes to assist former adversaries in realizing western values within their newly democratic nations. NATO is also addressing security through developing more flexible means to assist the UN in peacekeeping for humanitarian purposes. NATO has become the political organization that Canada sought. Canada wants a more stable world of shared values in which to do business. Rather than simply wishing for it to happen, based upon its experience of two world wars, Canada chose to make its voice heard through international organizations such as the UN and NATO. The continuing efforts to export the democratic values that NATO and Canada share to other nations ensures that NATO is as relevant to Canada today as it was in 1949.

⁸³ McDougall 16.

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