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GOING TO COMBAT! – INFLUENCING CANADA'S DECISION- MAKING PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

Canada is a secure nation relative to many others around the world in large part because of its geographic position and proximity to the United States. Contributing to the coalition of the willing or to multilateral interventions is often done in the political light of maintaining and ensuring the success of our national interests and has often justified providing just enough or minimal resources. In this regard, Canada focuses on maintaining "tertiary" interests rather than traditionally defined national interests and as a result does not have a consistent approach to decision-making when placing the lives of troops at risk.

An examination of the actors that have an influence in the decision-making process of government will demonstrate this inconsistency. A model showing the influencing relationship on the decision process will help to clarify presented examples.

The U.S. is the most dominant influence given Canada's relationship and tertiary interests. The lack of education and experience by Canada's Ministers makes government susceptible to other spheres of influence. Canada's strong centralization of government allows for a unilateralist approach that demonstrates inconsistency. Two influential spheres, National Defence and Foreign Affairs are not always aligned in their approach to global affairs and therefore offer inconsistent advice to government. The U.S. influence extends into multilateral bodies such as NATO and the UN to the extent that it is difficult to tell whose interests one is actually serving, the U.S., the world or simply Canada's. Finally, the sphere of influence of the media to politicize events skews the consistency in the decision-making process.

From these conclusions, five recommendations are made to improve the consistency in government decision-making and more importantly to re-engage the citizen to be more involved: creation of a permanent Cabinet Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence; creation of a subcommittee Task Force on any crisis requiring intervention; Parliamentary and Senate reforms to limit possible unilateral decisions being made for interventions other than during national emergencies. This should include as a minimum Parliamentary consultation and debate if not a required vote; raise education standards for Ministers with respect to international affairs and defence; and raise the public conscious with regard to International Affairs and Defence.

As citizens of a democracy, there is a responsibility that comes with the privilege of living in a free society such as Canada. The world is unlikely to become more stable anytime soon and Canada will continue to be called upon to help resolve conflicts and aid in reconstruction. The government owes it to the troops whose lives the nation places at risk to have a consistent approach to intervention.

I. INTRODUCTION

Between 1990 and 2006, Canada has been involved in approximately 72 missions where Canadian Forces troops were sent abroad.[1] Since 2002, and as of April 2008, 82 soldiers and one diplomat have paid the ultimate sacrifice for Canada's commitment to the war on terror in Afghanistan and towards that nations' rebuilding.[2] This is a high cost for Canadians in blood and treasure with respect to overseas interventions and is sometimes hard to put into context given the peaceful nature of this great nation.

The decision to send troops into a conflict zone is one that cannot be taken lightly. The current trend in conflicts around the world has shown that violence is increasing and the notion of traditional peacekeeping witnessed prior to the 90s is now but one type of intervention Canadian troops have to contend with. One would expect the nation to fully support, and more importantly to be fully aware of exactly what kind of conflict its troops are getting into. One would expect an informed decision to be made regarding the amount of resources required, the likely cost, and the risks involved. One would expect that the citizens of the nation would know whether its troop involvement is likely to be protracted or for a short duration and would be told of the risks involved. In short, the citizen should be informed of all aspects to the decision process. In a democracy one would call this responsible and transparent governance; which ultimately helps to provide the accountability and legitimacy to any engagement where soldiers are asked to go and "manage violence". The fact that a Deputy Minister of Defence can make the remark that

[1] Michael Dewing and Corinne McDonald, *International Deployment of Canadian Forces: Parliament's Role* (Ottawa, ON: Library of Parliament,[2006]).
[2] CTV News: http://www.ctv.ca/generic/generated/news/SEAfghanistan.html 23 April 08.

"we don't know anything about this country" almost one year after troops have deployed to Afghanistan is not indicative of an informed government.[3]

The decision-making process in the Canadian government when committing Forces to interventions is inconsistent and decisions made are often a result of secondary influencing factors rather than because of an appropriately developed government strategy. This ad hoc nature to committing "blood and treasure" to conflicts places into question the responsibility and accountability of the Canadian government to its citizenry and to the soldiers whose lives they are willing to place at risk.

This paper will examine this inconsistent approach to decision-making in three areas. First, an examination of Canada's national interests will show that there are no immediate vital interests that Canada is required to defend. Our alliance with the U.S. ultimately ensures our security. In fact, our real interest is to maintain this friendship through avenues such as trade, border security, and political support more so than interventions around the World. In addition, Canada's multilateral involvement with NATO and the UN is heavily influenced by the U.S., and as with many other nations has resulted in a hesitancy to commit to 'combat' type missions. As a result, there has been no real requirement for the Canadian government to develop a comprehensive decision-making process to interventions. In fact, Canada's contribution to interventions is often based more on 'tertiary interests' that can be more readily influenced from 'actors' far from the centre of government. This inconsistency in decision-making and the fact that actors who do not speak for this nation's national interest can have such a great influence

[3] Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar* (Toronto: Penguin Group, 2007), 21.

on Canada's commitments is not the responsibility and accountability framework that should be employed by a democratic nation.

The second area for discussion will focus on these actors and their hierarchy in the various layers of influence within the decision-making process. A decision-making model will be proposed as a reference point of discussion and then various examples will be explored to demonstrate how the Canadian government has allowed these various influencing layers to sometimes dominate decision-making leading to an inconsistent process. Some of the examples will question the responsible nature of some of these decisions that have required increased risk to our soldiers.

The final section will make five recommendations to instill a more consistent decision-making process to ensure that government is more responsible, accountable and transparent to the Canadian citizen in when committing troops to combat.

II. NATIONAL INTEREST

> "*War is not a mere act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political activity by other means ...*"[4]

The decision of whether a nation should commit forces to any type of intervention starts with a consideration of the national interest. A combat mission that will assuredly see the loss of troops must be of vital interest to the nation, whereas a peacekeeping mission, where the risk to troops is much lower, may not be of a vital nature. The reality is that in today's transnational environment it is not easy to distinguish when the national interest is truly threatened such that troops should be committed.

The end of the Cold War forced the NATO nations to reconsider their military requirements as well as their particular national security interests in areas other than

[4] Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought*, Third, Revised and Expanded ed. (London, UK: Frank Cass, 2001), 68.

collective defence. The correlation between the size of a nation's military, economic prosperity and achievement of the national interest is no longer as direct as it was in the past. Globalization has reduced the notion of using military force to achieve political aims between Western nations of similar economic ability. Collective defence enables many of the European nations to maintain a minimally sized force for national security. In addition, the notion of collective security, given the current threat against Western forces, allows the European nations to use these same forces for out-of-area operations.

Sending troops into harm's way, since the end of the Cold War, is more often than not a question of providing stability to a failed or failing state that may potentially upset the security within a region. The former Yugoslavia and Kosovo are clear examples where grounds for intervention by NATO were made for both regional and humanitarian reasons. Indeed, in these two examples, only when regional stability was becoming more of an issue did many of the nations acquiesce to contribute. This helps to explain in part the reluctance for Western countries to intervene in Africa which is normally based on humanitarian rather than due to regional security problems.

The rise in the number of failed and failing states that require the contribution of more than a traditional peacekeeping militarily equipped force has led to hesitancy by many nations to risk the lives of their soldiers abroad. One just has to consider the number of NATO nations in Afghanistan that are unwilling to commit troops in the Kandahar region. The hesitancy of the world community to intercede in the Balkans and Rwanda in the early 1990s also suggests reluctance to the commitment of troops to solve other countries problems. The national interest to do so must not be there.

Part of this hesitancy can be explained by the role the United States plays as a major power. Barry Posen in his article *Command of the Commons* makes the case that the U.S. Hegemony has, and will likely maintain command of the major sea, air and space routes for the foreseeable future. They will be able to pursue a policy of "selective engagement" in those contested areas that pose a threat to the relative security of the region and to the interests of the United States and her allies.[5] The author continues to say that the United States will pursue a multilateral agenda because the difficulties in containing uprisings in the littoral and contested zones of the commons will require substantive resources both in protecting vital interests and in projecting humanitarian aid.[6] Witness the case in Iraq and Afghanistan where the U.S. has now reconsidered its unilateral intervention strategy as its Forces are stretched.

Nevertheless, the dominance by the U.S. around the globe creates an expectation by other nations that the U.S. will indeed take care of business. This expectation has allowed U.S. allies to hesitate in contributing to forces for global intervention.

As a result of the American hegemonic presence, all nations are influenced by the United States either directly through bilateral agreements, or indirectly, through international organizations such as NATO or the UN. The U.S. influence in deciding whether or not the world should take an interest in a particular conflict is a major one. "The fact that NATO cannot act unless support is unanimous is not a policy conducive to multilateralism; it is a policy in support of unanimity and, in essence, gives more power

[5] Barry R. Posen, "Command of the Commons: The Military Foundations of U.S. Hegemony," *International Security* 28, no. No 1 (Summer 2003), 7.
[6] ibid., 44

to fewer states with a unilateral agenda."[7] As a result, nations that contribute forces to a U.S.-led multinational force, read NATO in Kosovo for example, will often do so as a tertiary interest to support U.S. interests rather than as a real national interest and are therefore more hesitant to place their troops directly in harms way if it can be avoided.

For Canada therefore, defining what is the national interest to a point that would allow clearer criteria to be developed when considering the deployment of troops to combat operations is problematic. Not only is Canada not a major power, it is a country that lives beside the largest power in the world, the United States, and is also geographically situated such that, as a result, its national interests are less threatened than other nations. It is generally accepted that national interests of a nation are invariant and that they should endure over time. Professor John Kirton proposed six national interests for Canada: "survival, security, sovereignty, legitimacy, territory, and relative capability".[8] The author argues that Canada is the World's most successful country as a result of its ability to maximize these interests without having to defend them militarily as required by other nations.[9] Our neighbour to the south provides this security and as a result, the emphasis on Canada's military has not been a priority since the end of the Second World War.

This does not mean that Canada is unwilling to commit Forces for interventions. It does mean that Canada does not feel bound to do so in respect to securing its national interest beyond maintaining a small force that can provide just enough domestic security

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[7] Frank P. Harvey, "Dispelling the Myth of Multilateral Security After 11 September and the Implications for Canada" In *Canada among Nations 2003: Coping with the American Colossus*, eds. David Carment, Fen Osler Hampson and Norman Hillmer (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2003), 206.
[8] John Kirton, *Canadian Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (Toronto, ON: Thomson Canada Ltd., 2007), 17.
[9] ibid., 17

and just enough towards international interventions to maintain Canada's image. In this respect Canadian foreign policy interests compete with the internationalist, or idealist, and the nationalist, or realist, theories.[10] The idealists are focused on global affairs and believe that the country should contribute to the international security, the Pearson camp.[11] The realists tend to focus on national issues of the state, the Trudeau camp.[12] In reality these two theories overlap and help to explain the often opposing views between the Departments of Foreign Affairs and National Defence.

With respect to Canadian intervention abroad, there are three major points that influence the government decision-making process. First, Canada-U.S. relations have been stated as the most important aspect of Canada's national interest.[13] Second, Canada's continued involvement in multinational institutions is based on the distinct Canadian values and concepts of internationalism, even if at a modest scale. Third, Canada remains focused on national unity and must often deal with domestic issues as a national interest. All three of these points are important considerations in the Canadian psyche and influence Canada's decision-making process for committing forces to interventions. In essence, Canada is focused on "tertiary" interests that support and maintain the greater national interests.

Canada is very much a trading nation with over 80% of its external trade being conducted directly with the United States.[14] As a resource-based nation rich in assets

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[10] Steven Kendall Holloway, *Canadian Foreign Policy: Defining the National Interest* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2006), 249.
[11] ibid., 249
[12] ibid., 249
[13] J. L. Granatstein, "The Importance of being Less Ernest: Promoting Canada's National Interests through Tighter Ties with the U.S." (Toronto, ON, C.D. Howe Institute, 2003).
[14] Canada. Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Overview.* (Ottawa, ON, Canada Communication Group, [2005]).

such as coal, oil, hydroelectricity, and lumber, Canada spends a great deal of its efforts in creating trade relationships, not only with the United States, but with other countries throughout the world. However, the amount of trade that is conducted with the United States, and the fact that Canada is geographically situated such that the security of this trade is not threatened, has lessened the security protection requirements for these major elements of national interest. Canada has not traditionally been required to spend a large amount of money on security. The emphasis that the United States has placed on border protection following the attacks of September the 11th has changed at least the perception of this requirement. Canada quickly made efforts to increase its border security to demonstrate the nation's resolve to reduce American concerns and to protect Canada-U.S. trade.[15]

Ironically, the "anti-American" rhetoric that appears in Canadian politics is contrary to what Canada fundamentally does in practice. Studies have shown that Canadians and Americans are very much alike in lifestyle. Canada depends heavily on the U.S. for trade and therefore our economic well-being. Canada relies on the U.S. for protection to the point that the country has often been considered as "free-rider" when it comes to security, both domestically and internationally. Finally, Canada has often been elevated to a status amongst other larger and more prosperous nations, such as the G-8, in part because of its relationship with the United States. For these reasons, Canada focuses its attention on the Canada-U.S. relationship.

While the Canadians have certainly demonstrated their abilities in the multilateral environment, and Prime Minister Pearson and his involvement with the Suez Crisis in

[15] Canada. Privy Council Office, *Securing and Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy.*(Ottawa, ON, Canada Communications Group,[2004]).. Foreign Affairs were negotiating increased border security requirements prior to 9/11. This event accelerated many of the initiatives under way.

1956 serves as an example, the request for Canada to be "at the table" is in large part due to the United States interests. Canada is often looked at as a counterbalance in negotiating with the European-Atlantic side. Similarly, at the United Nations, Canada is often viewed as a leveraging nation for United States interests.[16] While these points may be debatable, the point is that Canada's likeness to the U.S., Canada's dependency on the U.S. for its security, and Canada's interest in trade with the U.S. reduce Canada's independence on the world stage leveraging others national interests.

A third prominent theme that dominates Canada's focus in protecting its national interest is national unity. Canada has traditionally had its hands full trying to keep the federalist country together. Federal-provincial concerns dominate domestic politics and strongly influence foreign involvement overseas. Indeed, most of Canada's political focus is inwards to its domestic issues rather than outwards to the World. Canada's decision not to participate in the Iraq war in 2003 was in part influenced by Quebec's potential response to the U.S.-led invasion.[17] Canada's recent hesitation to recognize Kosovo as an independent nation was also largely due to Quebec's sovereignty concerns.[18] Both of these issues speak to Canada's balance between an internationalist and nationalistic focus.

Foreign and Defence Policies in Canada have always had difficulty in achieving full support because Canada's national interests are secure and well maintained. All that is required is that a little oil be placed in the right place from time to time to ensure that the U.S. concerns are reduced and that Canada receives international recognition for

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[16] Desmond Morton, "Strains of Affluence 1945-1996" In *The Illustrated History of Canada*, ed. Craig Brown (Toronto, ON: Key Porter Books Ltd., 2000), 485.
[17] Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, 78
[18] Canadian Press, "Harper Defends Kosovo Recognition as Unique Case," *CBC News Online*2008, http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/03/19/harper-kosovo.html.

supporting global values abroad. Defence is focused on multilateral support to intervention and the remnants of Cold War collective defence. The Department of Foreign Affairs has traditionally been focused on diplomacy, trade and global assistance. As a result, both policies do not reflect well the true national interest, are not well aligned and therefore do not offer a clear intervention strategy for the use of Canadian Forces in conflicts. Attempts by the government to write a coherent National Security Policy that would produce a "whole of government approach" to foreign interests was largely unsuccessful and was part of Prime Minister Martin's strategy to signal to the U.S. that Canada was doing something regarding border security rather than developing a comprehensive approach.[19]

This dichotomy between bilateral and international commitments in policy is not surprising for two reasons. First, Canada has long been a member of two large military alliances, NATO and NORAD. These two alliances are bureaucratic, Cold War focused, and expensive. As a result, much of Canada's military policies and efforts up until the end of the Cold War were focused on maintaining a force contribution able to meet the nation's commitments. Only in the area of Peacekeeping did Canada opt to exercise some independence and expertise, albeit often at the request and influence of the U.S. more so than internationally back organizations such as the U.N. The second reason is that Foreign Policy in Canada is focused on increasing global trade as well as creating ties to immigrant countries that have made Canada the rich multicultural society that it is today. In the relatively static Cold War era there was not much need to align Canada's foreign and defence policies, especially when the national interest was focused internally and to the south.

[19] Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, 117

This is not to say that Canada is not interested in issues outside its borders. Canada has always recognized its responsibility to contribute to the resolution of international crises. Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent, in post-war 1947, outlined five principles for Canadian Foreign Policy which included: "national unity; political liberty; the rule of law in international affairs; the values of a Christian civilization; the acceptance of international responsibility."[20] These longstanding principles have since been included in the Canadian Charter of Rights, albeit in a more secular fashion. Implementation of this internationalist policy has always been conducted through Canada's involvement in the many world organizations such as the United Nations or through international coalitions. Canada's ability to deliver as a nation, however, is not that significant when compared to its ideals.

A nation's ability to advance its national interests is based upon the determinants of power of that nation. Hard Power is the ability of "Country A to make Country B do X, when X is not in Country B's interests to do so".[21] The determinants of a country to wield power are made up of the following: "geography, demographics, military capacity, economic capacity, politics, national will, and ideas including image or culture." [22] As already stated, Canada's geographic location and trade relationship with the United States offers it a unique position where involvement in international affairs has been one of choice rather than of a necessity to protect national interests. Even during the height of the Cold War, Canada, under Prime Minister Trudeau, tried unsuccessfully to reduce commitments to both NATO and NORAD. It was if Canada, and many of the European

[20] Kim Richard Nossal, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, Third ed. (Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall Canada Inc., 1997), 156.
[21] Kim Richard Nossal, "Power and World Politics" In *The Patterns of World Politics* (Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall Allyn and Bacon Canada, 1998), 91.
[22] NSSP 10 Determinants of Power Lecture 29 January 2008

Nations, had become 'lapsed Catholics' unwilling to contribute to the annual collection for the collective security of Europe.[23] Although this withdrawal did not materialize for various reasons, the reality is that our politicians do not see the priority to develop determinants of power, such as military capacity, that do not have a direct bearing on the more important issues of the national interest as previously stated. For the same reasoning, the determinant of national will to place Canadian troops at risk for international conflicts that do not have a direct bearing on the national interests is not strong. Canada's decision to remain in the Afghanistan province of Kandahar is based upon the expectation that troops would be exposed to a decreasing amount of combat, for example; even though the Taliban have different views.[24]

The government's decision to commit troops to international conflicts is based more so on "tertiary interests" than in defence of her national interests. A Foreign policy based on values and the dependency of government on Cold War international bodies, NATO and the U.N., to decide when military intervention is required has allowed much of the decision-making process in Canada to be overly influenced from outside actors. Two major outside influences on Canada's decision-making emerge from a look at her national interest: maintaining Canada-U.S. relations; and supporting international interventions that are often U.S.-led or influenced. Because Canada's national interests are very secure, the tendency is to approach this maintenance with a "just enough" attitude which has made it difficult for the Departments of Defence and Foreign Affairs to develop a coordinated and coherent policy. Indeed, during much of the 1990s, both departments were concerned more with departmental cuts than developing coherent

[23] Nossal, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, 159
[24] John Ivison, "The Blindly Irrational Debate Over Afghanistan," *National Post*Saturday, February 09, 2008, nationalpost.com.

policy. The third influencing factor is the nationalist focus on maintaining the country together, the realists. The focus on national unity often influences Canada's decision to contribute troops overseas. These influencing factors on deciding what is in the "tertiary" versus the national interest regarding the commitment of troops overseas has fostered an inconsistent, and some may say, irresponsible approach to putting the lives of our soldiers at risk.

III. ACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Although Canada does not place intervention high on its priority list of national interests, as stated earlier intervention is more of a tertiary and sustaining interest, the reality is that Canada does participate in many operations that involve risk to its troops. There are a number of actors involved in influencing the decision to involve Canadian troops. While the legal basis for a final decision to commit troops rests with the government alone, many of the other actors play an important role in providing advice that will influence the result.

The government of the day is responsible for deciding whether to put troops in harms way or not. "As a matter of Canadian constitutional law, the situation is clear. The Federal Cabinet can, without parliamentary approval or consultation, commit Canadian Forces to action abroad, whether in the form of a specific current operation or future contingencies resulting from international treaty obligations." [25] Any decision is encapsulated in an Order in Council that is specifically written for the specific deployment or in a Standing Order in Council covered by a standing treaty, such as the North Atlantic Treaty.

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[25] Dewing and McDonald, *International Deployment of Canadian Forces: Parliament's Role*, 1

Although Parliament may not be active in the decision to deploy troops, it holds the government responsible for such decisions and provides, for example, oversight to the necessary supplementary spending estimates required for such a deployment.[26] According to the National Defence Act, Parliament must be informed of an active service deployment within 10 days of an announcement.[27] This allows Parliament to question the government of the day on the decision taken that puts troops in harm's way. While the opposition party may question the government and debate some of the issues surrounding the deployment, these ensuing debates are not traditionally designed to defeat the government. If Parliament is not in agreement, however, the government decision could eventually lead to a politicization of the deployment and the opposition could bring down the government by not approving supplementary spending estimates or by politicizing other policies that would require a motion in the House to be approved. In this respect, Parliament holds a consulting or influencing role in the decision.

An example of this occurred recently in February 2008 with the debate over the extension of the mission in Afghanistan. The minority government decided to include the opposition parties in the debate to extend the current mandate to 2011 because they recognized the growing politicization of the issue. If the government had decided to not include Parliament it knew it would likely be faced with a large opposition to any future motions to increase spending that resulted from the extension. In addition, the opposition would likely continue to question the government over any politicized media item like the "detainee question." By involving the opposition, or Parliament, in the decision to extend the mission, the government was required to compromise on its resolution but

[26] ibid.
[27] *National Defence Act,* (2005): Art 32.

succeeded in passing the motion and likely avoided politicizing future supplementary estimate issues.[28] In addition, the Conservatives have effectively removed this major issue from the next election campaign.

Although Parliament's involvement in deciding to deploy troops has been inconsistent, traditionally they have been consulted prior to major troop deployments.[29] The debates that ensued tended to focus on issues other than whether or not Canada should participate, likely because of United Nations Security Council authorizations:

> Debate tended to focus on the ability of Canada and the armed forces – given the current environment of limited human, material and financial resources – to take on new commitments. Many challenges to the government revolved around providing adequate equipment and personnel to ensure the Canadian military was not overstretched and could complete its assignments without causing undue risk, either physical or mental, to its personnel. Questions seemed to focus more on whether Canadian Forces should be deployed if/when they did not have the proper resources to do the job safely, rather than on whether they should be sent at all.[30]

Although not directly involved in the final decision process, there are other key actors that provide advice and influence the decision of whether the government should contribute forces internationally. These other principal actors include the Privy Council Office (PCO), the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), and the Department of National Defence. Other contributing actors to the decision process in terms of influence, if not advice, include the media and public opinion. Finally, there are many external influences to the nation's decision-making process that include international bodies such as the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as well as the various head's of the executive branch of other nations such as the President of the United States.

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[28] Cindy E. Harnett, "Dion Seeks Agreement on Mission: Blames Government for Showdown Over Issue as Spring Election Looms," *Times Colonist*Sunday, February 10, 2008, canada.com network.
[29] Dewing and McDonald, *International Deployment of Canadian Forces: Parliament's Role*, 4
[30] ibid.

Any recommendation for troop deployment would normally come from the Minister of Defence through the Department. The Department would develop a course of options for the government to consider regarding the number of troops required, the cost, and of course the duration of the intended deployment. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) would also provide recommendations to the government on any potential deployment. These recommendations would normally be coordinated between the two departments to ensure a consistent approach is made.

In terms of direct advice and influence, the PCO and PMO have the most influence in most cases and are considered central agencies of the government, the latter partisan and the former providing advice on recommendations from the bureaucracy. The Privy Council Office is a public service office that provides the bureaucratic continuity of government. This office holds the responsibility to question other departments recommendations provided to the government to ensure that unbiased information and recommendations are made, a "challenge function". The Privy Council Office has direct contact with the Prime Minister and has the responsibility to staff a Memorandum to Cabinet for Foreign Deployments that addresses certain criteria: [31]

i. mission objectives that support Canadian Foreign Policy objectives;

ii. the mandate is realistic, clear and enforceable;

iii. international and political and financial support as well as other resources is sufficient to achieve the desired end;

iv. the proposed forces are adequate and appropriate for the mandate;

v. an effective process of consultation between mission partners is in place;

[31] Canada. Department of National Defence, *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World:* (Ottawa, ON: Canada Communications Group,[2005]).

vi. there is a clear exit strategy or desired end state.

The Memorandum to Cabinet is produced by DFAIT in coordination with DND and staffed through the PCO to cabinet. PCO reviews and updates the document accordingly for final presentation. [32] They have the second to last word in providing direct advice to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister's Office is a partisan group that is appointed by the government to provide direct political advice separate from the bureaucracy. This is the group that will consider the political ramifications of a deployment, such as the effect that Quebec public opinion may have on the contribution of combat troops to an international conflict. This is the group that has the last word in providing advice to the Prime Minister.

The media and public opinion play an important role in the decision process as well. The media and public opinion will greatly affect the future of any political campaign. The media may raise positive or negative public opinion, usually the latter, on a particular issue that may influence any political re-election campaign and as such must be considered when making a decision to commit troops to situations that may cost lives. An example is the influence that the citizens of Quebec have on any military commitment. The deployment to Haiti in 1995 in support of the UN mission had a positive effect on the opinion of Quebec citizens, especially due to the "La Francaphonie" and Haitian expatriate community in Montreal connection, while the current situation in Afghanistan has the least support from this group amongst Canadians, and is dropping.[33]

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[32] For more information on Memorandum to Cabinet consult the following PCO website: http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/index.asp?lang=eng&page=information&sub=publications&doc=mc/mc_e.htm.

[33] James Bartleman, *Rollercoaster: My Hectic Years as Jean Chrétien's Diplomatic Advisor 1994-1998* (Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 2005), 160.

This was a contributing factor why the motion was made to keep troops in Afghanistan to only 2011 and to minimize future combat missions there in favour of doing more reconstruction. As one can see, the media, public opinion, and provincial alignment on an issue do influence the decision-making process.

Another sphere of influence on the decision-making process comes from the international bodies of the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that play a significant role in Canada's decision to participate overseas. Traditionally Canada will participate in coalition operations only if there is a UN mandate to do so. Similarly, until the 1990s, Canada's commitment to NATO was always in the form of contributing troops to the collective defence of Europe during the Cold War. Recent armed conflicts that have required NATO to step in have not always been sanctioned by the UN initially.

The final actor that provides influence in the decision-making of government to commit troops is other executive level governments represented normally by the respective Presidents and their state departments or foreign affairs divisions. On many occasions other countries have approached Canada seeking support for multilateral participation in conflicts.

IV. INFLUENCING RELATIONSHIPS IN GOVERNMENT DECISIONS

The following models describe two lines of thought in the decision-making process by government and help to examine the dynamic relationship of the various actors that play a role. More importantly this model will help explain the influence that these various actors have on the final decision. The first line of thought is based on the question why should the government intervene? The second line of thought is based on

the question how should the government intervene? It is important to distinguish between these two lines of thought in decision-making because they provide different insight into how the various actors influence the overall process.

The first line of thought, or the why in the decision-making process, is concerned with the national interest of the country. If the country is threatened by another state with a potential violent conflict, then there is no doubt that all of the vital interests of the country are at stake. In this scenario, all of the actors in the decision-making process will agree as to the priority of the situation. Indeed, the nation is at war and the industrial base of the country will mobilize to defend her. All of the actors that are involved that may have some influence in the decision of this priority on the national interest converge to a unified consensus. There is no debate.

In a different scenario, however, the Nation may not be threatened at all by another state. The country may be asked to participate in an intervention abroad to assist the international community. The common examples for Canada are peacekeeping or humanitarian missions. W. Macnamara and Ann Fitz-Gerald defined the levels of national interest into three categories: vital, important and humanitarian.[34] Assigning a level of interest against a possible intervention becomes a subjective process, however, and all of the actors involved in influencing the final decision may not agree as to the national priority. There is likely to be disagreement.

The second line of thought, or the 'how' in the decision-making process, is concerned more with the mechanics of the nation getting on with the operation of a particular intervention. The answer to this question is very process driven and is more

[34] W. D. Macnamara and Ann Fitz-Gerald, "A National Security Framework for Canada," *Institute for Research on Public Policy* 3, no. no. 10 (October 2002), 15.

concerned with comparisons of budgets, personnel availability, and timelines, and is less concerned with thinking about the value of the intervention in the national psyche. That decision has been made in the first line of thought and this second question defines how the government is going to deal with the situation.

Returning to the first scenario described above, the state at war defending itself against another threatening state, the 'how', will very much look at the full mobilization of the defence industrial base and the government will be less concerned with the national budget. Looking at the second scenario of a peacekeeping mission, however, the government will carefully consider and weigh the various aspects of other national priorities against possible physical commitments and the impact on the budget, personnel, and timelines etc. Once again, the same actors involved in the 'why', will also have an influence on the 'how' the nation will intervene. There is likely to be disagreement.

A linear model produced by the Director General Peacekeeping for the AMSC 6 course at the Canadian Forces College in 2003 describes the intergovernmental process of how a recommendation is made to the government of the day regarding an intervention.[35] This process, reprinted below, shows the various influencing actors involved and the hierarchal flow diagram of the bureaucratic documentation as it ascends to the government for a final decision. The diagram is simplistic in the sense that there is often a constant influencing dynamic at play, not represented, between the various actors involved in preparation of the various options as to why the government is going to intervene relative to the national interest. In addition, there are outside actors that also have an influence as already discussed that are not necessarily internal to this process: the

[35] Colonel R. V. Blanchette, "Canadian Forces and Peace Support Operations" (Powerpoint presentation, Ottawa, ON, 2003).

media and public opinion and the U.S. President for example. What the diagram does convey is the flow of the final document, the memorandum to Cabinet, as it is presented to the government.

As a quick example, the government of the day may decide that it is in Canada's interest to contribute to a UN sanctioned peacekeeping mission. The intergovernmental departments will hold various meetings and decide on various options. These options could be anything from imposing economic sanctions, participating in diplomatic discussions, sending peacekeepers, or simply stating the nation's support for international action. Various documents that outline the various departments thoughts on why the nation should participate and how the nation should participate flow up to the government through the process defined below. The government considers the options and then decides. Given the hierarchal nature of the intergovernmental departments, it is easy to see how those departments closer to the centre of government should have an increasing influence on the final decision. As already stated, the PCO and the PMO office will often have the last word before government deliberates over a question of intervention.

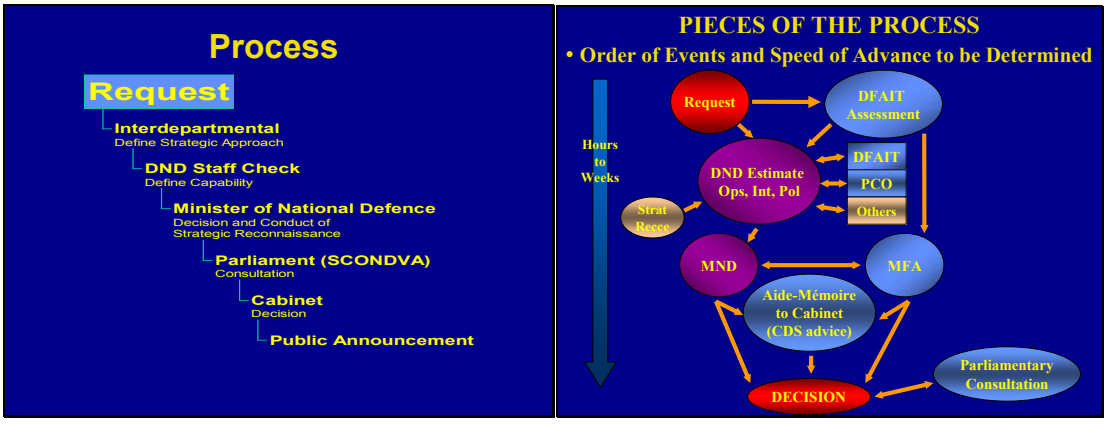

Figure 1: DG Peacekeeping's decision-making process as presented to AMSC 6 in 2003

What the diagram fails to show is the dynamic relationship between the various actors that influence the decision to be made, especially when there is a lack of consensus, and from those external actors to the process. Often, the intergovernmental departments will disagree with both 'why' and 'how' the government of the day should be involved. The model below attempts to show this dynamic relationship. It places the various actors in a three dimensional relationship with respect to the 'why' and 'how'. It also attempts to show the amount of influence one actor may have when dealing with the government, or other departments for that matter, as compared with other actors.

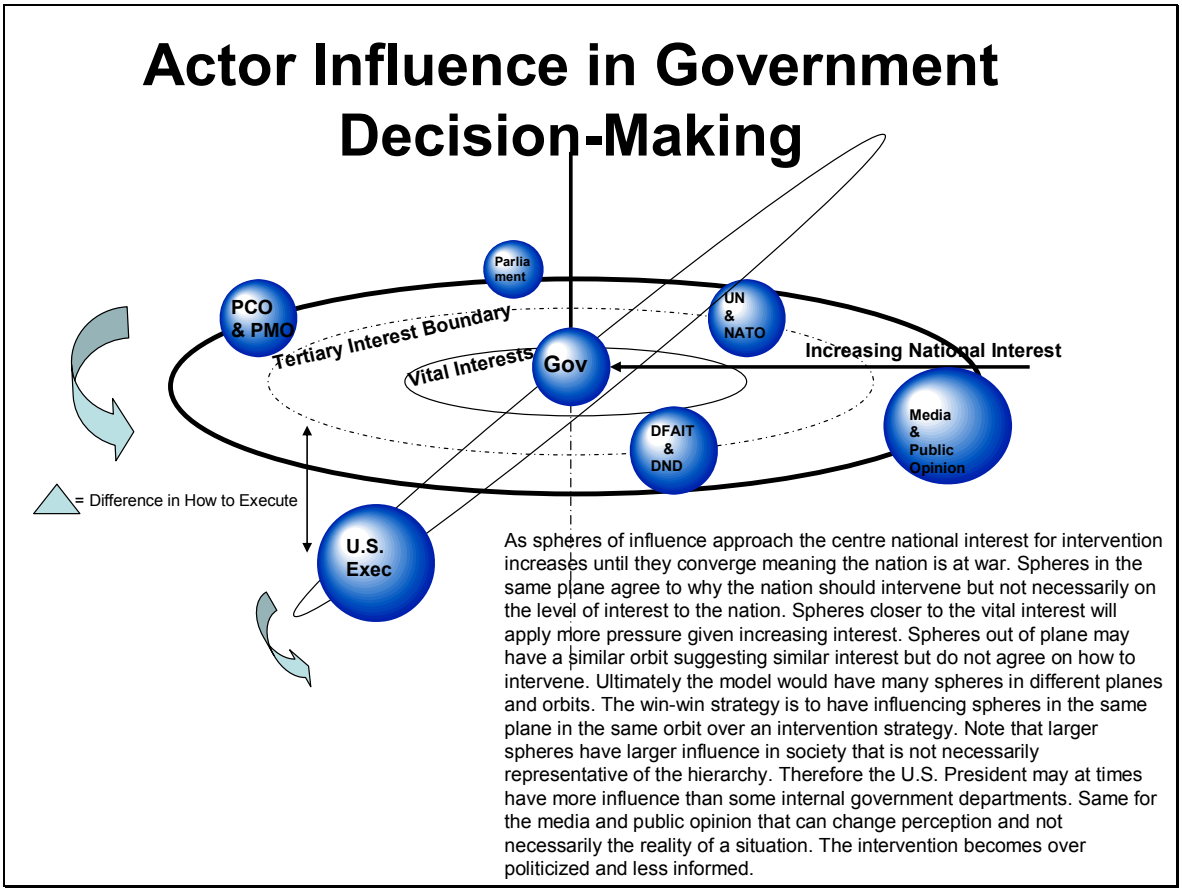

Figure 2: The influencing relationship of actors in the government decision-making process

Each of the intergovernmental departments that play an influencing role in the decision-making process is represented by a sphere. For simplicity, the model has been

simplified to six spheres of influence with government represented at the centre. Some of the actors have a larger influence in society than others; Media and Public opinion in Canada can often have a larger influencing factor on decisions than DFAIT and the Military for example. Parliament has a consultative and political influencing role. Each of the actors revolves around the government in a specific plane and orbit. The x-axis represents the various levels of national interest and defines the "why" plane of intervention. As the orbits approach the centre, the level of national interest increases and if the nation is at war then all the actors would converge at the centre in total consensus. For other interventions, the actors may not agree as to the level of national interest and would therefore occupy different orbits in the "why" or x-axis plane. Given the various levels of influence then, it is possible for a larger influencing actor that considers an intervention to be less important in the National Interest to directly influence the decision-making process outlined in the previously described linear model.

The "how" to conduct a mission or intervention is represented by the same "x-axis" plane if the associated influencing actors are in agreement. If there is disagreement in "how" to execute the mission then this is represented by the sphere being on a separate plane. The angle between the x-axis and these other planes indicates the level of difference in agreement of how to execute the mission. A 90 deg plane to the x-axis would indicate almost an opposite view of how to conduct the mission. An influential actor who is both in a different orbit and in a different plane will likely influence the nation's intervention strategy.

In the example presented, the U.S. Executive Branch is in disagreement of "how" an intervention should proceed but is in agreement with the UN, NATO as well as DND

and DFAIT as to the level of national interest involved: not a vital interest but greater than a tertiary interest. They all agree that something needs to be done; however, the U.S. is advocating a different method of how to proceed. The Media and Public Opinion sphere as well as the PCO and PMO sphere agree with most of the players of how to intervene but believe that the national interest is only tertiary; they may not be willing to accept the same number of casualties in the end. If the spheres on this plane cannot come to a consensus then a separate plane will be created and divergence of agreement occurs. This difference of how to intervene may only happen after casualties start to occur.

This model better represents the dynamic relationship between the influencing actors in the decision-making process. Depending on the perceived "national interest" of the various groups and their level of influence with respect to the other influencing actors on government, the final decision to be made is likely to be different.

As a more concrete example, consider the recent decision to extend the current mandate of Canadian troops in Afghanistan until 2011. Notionally, the request to remain in Afghanistan came from external sources including both the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, although officially it was a request from the Afghan government.[36] In addition, the current deployment in Afghanistan is backed by a UN mandate: on the same plane and in the same orbit for these two spheres of influence. The next sphere of influence was the media and public opinion which was strongly divided, with Quebec firmly parked in the non-combatant and even withdrawal camp indicating a low tertiary interest: in a different plane and in a different orbit. This was reported upon by the media, and made this aspect a highly controversial one leading up to the debate.

[36] Rob Walker, "Canadian Military Extension in Afghanistan could Trigger Election," nowpublic.com, http://www.nowpublic.com/world/canadian-military-extension-afghanistan-could-trigger-election (accessed Feb 08,

On the other hand, advice from the departments of Foreign Affairs and Defence was supportive of continued engagement and advised that remaining in Kandahar was tantamount to continuing with 'combat operations'; closer to a vital interest orbit and in the same plane as the UN/NATO and the U.S.[37] Nonetheless, the recommendations coming from the Department of Defence and the Department of Foreign Affairs considered the respective media opinions, the cost of continuing operations, the potential future requirements to continue to 2011, and the importance, or not, of continuing the campaign to achieve the overall objective of improving conditions in Afghanistan. These two departments would have maintained a constant two-way exchange with their respective counterparts in the U.S. and other NATO countries to examine the courses of action. The Privy Council Office considered the recommendations objectively and offered their advice taking into account the various spheres of influence. Finally, the Prime Minister's Office considered all of the political factors involved. In the end, the Prime Minister placed this decision before parliament, likely based on the political aspects of the debate as already discussed. This example was close to the ideal in that most of the influencing actors were in agreement: they were in the same plane and in the same orbit. The influence of the Media and Public opinion combined with the potential future influence of Parliament likely forced the government to step carefully through the above two processes. In effect, the two models, linear and 3-D, worked well.

SIX FACTORS OF REALITY

Although the example just presented did actually occur in the manor described above, it was more a result of happenstance than of following any consistent process.

[37] CBC Online News, "Extend Afghan Mission if NATO Sends More Troops: Panel," *CBC News Online*2008, http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/01/22/afghan-manley.html.

First, the Canadians have been in Afghanistan for close to six years. In that time we have sent troops to Afghanistan three times without bringing the issue before a Parliamentary vote.[38] Although issues have been debated concerning these deployments there has been no debate on leaving troops in place. In making this latest decision to extend troops until 2011, the government followed the described model above more for political reasons, and by chance, than in attempting to follow a consistent decision-making process. The current government is a minority government. The Liberals, the official opposition, did not want Canadians to remain in combat and called for their withdrawal. They wished instead for Canada to be more involved in reconstruction activities. The NDP and the Bloc Quebecois demanded that our Forces be withdrawn completely. To further complicate the process, the minority government had been discussing options for a possible election and the outcome of the Afghanistan debate could have resulted in the government losing confidence in parliament. It can be argued that bringing the issue to a parliamentary vote was designed to provoke the Liberals to try and defeat the government. In the end, the governing Conservatives compromised with the Liberals and took the motion to Parliament to reduce future debate on this issue. So although the current government followed an informed process to arrive at the eventual motion put before Parliament it was certainly not from a designed decision process to send troops into conflict.

The real model used by the Government of Canada to commit troops to hostile interventions is ad hoc at best. This type of approach lacks consistency, is easily influenced by uninformed and external actors and does not stand up to scrutiny when one

[38] The first deployment of combat troops occurred in 2002 under Op Apollo; the PPCLI deployed to Kandahar. The second deployment occurred from 2003 to December 2005 mostly under Operation Athena. The third commitment occurred on July 31, 2006 under ISAF with an extension until 2009 and now a pending extension until 2011 based on the Manley report.
http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/afghanistan/canada.html

considers that these types of decisions are putting people's lives at risk. While there is definitely a process in place that considers the "how" of intervention, the previously described linear process, the "why" government should intervene is inconsistent with respect to the national interest and is easily influenced by various spheres. A look at previous interventions by Canada underscores six factors with regard to the influence on decision-making that make our government approach to intervention inconsistent.

The first and the most dominant sphere of influence is the United States. Canada has at times committed troops to interventions from direct pressure demands made by the U.S. President directly to the Prime Minister or through the Defence Minister.

> "Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, Prime Minister Mulroney committed Canadian Forces to the operation during dinner with U.S. President Bush on 06 August….these decisions were taken without reference to the Minister of National Defense who was out of the country, or the Secretary of State for External Affairs who was not in Ottawa."[39]

While it could be argued that the Prime Minister contacted these individuals by phone, the fact of the matter is that Canada was directly influenced by the United States and did not follow any formal decision process. Similarly, Canada's second commitment to Afghanistan and ISAF in 2003 was a result of direct pressure from the U.S. Secretary of Defence to the Minister of National Defence John McCallum.[40] According to Janice Stein, the "raison d'être for the deployment was to support Washington. The operational challenges of Kandahar were not discussed."[41] A third example occurred in 1994 when President Clinton made direct appeals to Prime Minister Chrétien to support a U.S.-led invasion of Haiti to expel the dictator General Raul Cédras.[42] Canada declined to

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[39] Dewing and McDonald, *International Deployment of Canadian Forces: Parliament's Role*, xviii
[40] Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, 49
[41] ibid., 51
[42] Bartleman, *Rollercoaster: My Hectic Years as Jean Chrétien's Diplomatic Advisor 1994-1998*, 160

participate in this invasion which tended to contradict the nation's interests in such affairs. While all three interventions cited were supported by UN sanctions, it is clear that the U.S. played a major role in influencing these interventions and that the Prime Minister felt that it is was in Canada's interest to help its neighbour. In many respects this makes sense, because maintaining good relations with the United States is a national interest, and as previously discussed is part of Canada's plan to maintain its secure place in the World. However, making an "informed" decision to support the national interest by sending troops in harm's way demands a more consistent process that reacts to more than just one actor or influence.

A second factor that directly affects how government is influenced by the various spheres is the background in foreign affairs and defence that Ministers possess when they arrive in government. The leadership of Canada is first and foremost concerned with getting elected or re-elected. Most of the Prime Minister's efforts prior to arriving in office were focused on domestic issues which include managing many of the provincial as well as federal political problems. Foreign policy for most politicians, except perhaps those that are, or have been, in charge of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, is not at the top of their priority list. Indeed, many Ministers have little or no real understanding of Defence either: what the problems are with deployments; the type of troops that are required to deploy; the number of personnel to make a commitment work; or, the cost associated with a longer term deployment. This is not to say that our government is not informed, but only that the learning curve of any Prime Minister and newly elected government to understanding Foreign Policy and Defence matters on the international scene is significant. Add this to the many higher priority domestic issues that traditionally

face the government, such as the economy and health, it becomes partly evident why Canada is not well known for a consistent Foreign and Defence Policy. In the early and mid-1990s for example, the Liberal government was very much focused on trade as its Foreign Policy and not on Defence, which it was systematically downsizing. Only shortly before and certainly after the September 11 attacks when U.S. security became a large and higher priority issue did any real focus to the concepts of intervention and a re-look at our Foreign and Defence policies occur. The International Policy for Canada produced by the Liberals in 2005 was a difficult undertaking by the government bureaucracy and, in the end, was more focused on demonstrating what the current government had accomplished than outlining a comprehensive strategy.[43] This showed the lack of understanding by the departments and their Ministers regarding their specific portfolios. Canada's Ministers arrive in positions of power having never really considered the importance of deciding when and how to deploy personnel in harm's way. Education in statesmanship is thus not so much a platform for election as much as a requirement after the fact.

For the third factor, one must consider the influences on the decision-making process within government itself. In his 2001 book, *Governing from the Centre*, Mr. Savoie outlines how the central agencies and the Prime Minister have steadily gained more control over the years regardless of which party is governing. Often, Cabinet has been marginalized.[44] Even when a cabinet committee exists, the Prime Minister can, and has, taken unilateral decisions which his cabinet ministers find out about after the fact.

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[43] Canada. Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Securing and Open Society: (*Ottawa, ON, Canada Communications Group, 1-52)

[44] Donald J. Savoie, *Governing from the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 71.

> "power has shifted away from line ministers and their departments towards the centre, and also, within the centre itself, power has shifted to the prime minister and his senior advisors at both the political and public service levels and away from Cabinet and Cabinet committees."[45]

Mr Savoie goes on to explain that part of the reason for this centralization of power with the Prime Minister is due to the increase in media politicization of events, the particular requirements of government on major issues such as unity, provincial relations, globalization, and the "lack of checks within the federal government to define the outer limits of his authority."[46] This inconsistency in approach to government decision-making is open to uninformed influences.

The fourth factor with respect to the reality of the decision-making process involves DND and DFAIT. The recommendations that are made by these two departments are not as coordinated as one might expect. Over the last decade, Foreign Affairs in Canada have moved towards a softer approach to intervention while the Canadian Forces has maintained the requirement to be able to conduct both soft and hard power. Although the current focus of all departments is on the "Whole of Government Approach" with respect to Afghanistan, this is a relatively new concept and it remains to be seen if this approach will continue after the Afghanistan mission ends.

The fact that DND and Foreign Affairs are not aligned is concerning from a National Interest perspective. In 1997, Richard Nossal described Canada as a nation unsure of which camp the country should embrace. In typical Canadian fashion we tend to "hop" between the internationalist and regionalist camps of diplomacy.

> "In short, in the mid-1990s, the key components of internationalism – engagement in global governance and a commitment to multilateralism – remain. But many of the other cornerstones of the internationalist credo

[45] ibid., 7
[46] ibid., 13

> that underwrote Canadian foreign policy for so many years appear to have been discarded."[47]

At the heart of any of these policies is Canada's continued aversion to commit troops to engagements other than peacekeeping. In 2003, Foreign Affairs Minister Graham admitted that Afghanistan had not been on his department's radar screen concerning Canada's involvement in ISAF.[48] In June of 1994, Prime Minister Chrétien refused to participate in the U.S.-led invasion of Haiti even though there had been a multilateral UN resolution supporting the intervention. Canada later accepted to provide a peacekeeping role for its military in that country.[49] These decisions seem to diminish the importance of Canada-U.S. relations as being our number one vital interest but demonstrate how Canada's focus is on maintenance of our secure place in the World with respect to our national interest. As long as we contribute to U.S. or multilateral interventions from time to time then the U.S. will not ask the government to contribute more. While this comment may seem cynical, there does not seem to be another explanation for the apparent lack of consistency to contributing troops to international interventions.

From a decision advisory role, both National Defence and Foreign Affairs should ideally be aligned when providing advice to the Prime Minister, either through Cabinet or through the PCO, PMO. The fact that Foreign Affairs and National Defence are often not aligned makes it all the more difficult to make an informed decision or to necessarily predict where Forces should be committed. The majority of commitments that have occurred over the last ten years have not required an urgent decision on the part of the

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[47] Nossal, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, 160
[48] Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, 44
[49] Bartleman, *Rollercoaster: My Hectic Years as Jean Chrétien's Diplomatic Advisor 1994-1998*, 163

government. Even when Iraq had invaded Kuwait, there was ample time for the Prime Minister to return home and consult his Cabinet and other influencing actors to make an informed decision to what Canada would contribute. The problem is that the government is not able to appropriately forecast potential intervention because it tends to operate in a reactive mode with incongruent or no policy advice from either Foreign Affairs or National Defence.

This rift between the two departments has been a long standing one. The military has always maintained its requirement for multi-purpose, combat capable troops that are interoperable with our NATO allies and more importantly can support our U.S. counterparts to the south. Strategically, National Defence recognizes the importance of internationalism and the ability to fully contribute to both interventions in failed and failing states and continued collective defence and security.

This division in thinking was put into question during the 1990s after the Cold War ended and resulted in military downsizing of both personnel and resources. DFAIT is still downsizing having been hit harder than DND, with no relief in sight. While Canada's participation in Afghanistan and elsewhere may have reversed this trend for the moment, there is no indication whether or not the government is interested in increasing the nation's intervention ability in the future. There are mixed signals regarding this, both from the Manley report that would see reduced combat in the Kandahar region, and from current foreign policy statements that want the nation to focus on regions such as Africa or the Americas.[50]

[50] P. C. Manley and others, *Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan* (Ottawa, ON: Public Works and Government Services Canada,[2008]).

This dichotomy is not necessarily a bad thing as it forces both departments to reconsider the government's requirements around the world. It keeps a check and balance on the views of the other department regarding security issues that necessarily compete with other domestic resources such as health and education; although DND has been in a more dominant, although perhaps temporary, position after 9/11. On one hand, the military is always considering possible military interventions in countries such as Iran or even China. On the other hand, Foreign Affairs is focused on the diplomatic and humanitarian requirements of countries such as Africa and the Americas. The military is notionally prepared to participate in such peacekeeping requirements in the future but at the same time insists that it must maintain a combat capable force. Afghanistan may help to solidify this argument with Foreign Affairs for failed and failing states but it does not mean that there will be agreement with regard to potential future intra-state conflicts.

What is not good about this dichotomy is that rarely will the centre of government receive a coordinated strategy from Foreign Affairs and National Defence. This is troubling as it speaks again to the reactive nature of Canada to incidents in this world. It also means that the government will have difficulty in choosing between the two camps when required. In an ideal world, Foreign Affairs should have the lead and the military should provide the required advice with respect to security and any possible intervention. In most cases, the intervention requirement, and follow-on influence on the decision, comes more from the multilateral UN or NATO requests for assistance rather than a recommendation from the department of Foreign Affairs.

The fifth factor that influences the decision-making process is "alliancemanship", which is a traditional cornerstone of Canada's multilateralism to intervention. The reality

is that both of the main institutions, the UN and NATO are heavily influenced by the U.S. While it can certainly be argued that the UN provides legitimacy in any intervention because of the consensus requirement, it can also be argued that "realpolitik" and diplomacy have a major influence in the decisions made at the UN. This is definitely the case with NATO, where the ability of this body to intervene militarily is directly attributable to the U.S.[51] For example, most of the equipment and resources in Operation Allied Force came from the U.S., so much so, that other NATO nations looked to build the European Union Army afterwards to balance this disparity. At the moment this has not yet come to fruition. Afghanistan in 2005 was under a similar circumstance where much of the headquarters equipment was provided by the U.S. In fact NATO requested that much of the U.S. equipment from Operation Enduring Freedom remain in place as a precondition for NATO taking over.

The U.S. influence tends to diminish the multilateral concepts for intervention. It skews the concept of "alliancemanship". It becomes more difficult to ascertain whether the request to intervene is a request from a multilateral body or if the U.S. made the request first and is seeking multilateral support after. It can be argued that the influence of the U.S. has become so great that in many ways the UN and NATO are becoming less relevant as a decision-making body towards intervention. If the U.S. does not get the support it is looking for then it will develop a coalition of the willing or it will go in alone. Even the Pope, during his visit to Washington in April 2008, admonished the great powers and in particular the U.S. with respect to how the UN is controlled.[52] Canada is

[51] Nossal, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, 40
[52] Stevens Edwards, "Pope Warns Against Undermining UN," *Ottawa Citizen*2008, http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=2e9ed9c4-2a81-4971-ab59-b34fc0147245&k=98788.

not immune from this large sphere of influence that often operates in a different orbit of national interest or a different plane of how to conduct the mission.

So what does this mean for Canada and its ability to make decisions with regard to intervention? It means that the national interest of Canada-U.S. relations plays an ever increasing influence on the government either from the U.S. sphere directly or from a "multilateral" sphere such as the UN or NATO. It also means that Canada is more likely to be influenced by these two spheres in the decision-making process than it is likely to be influenced by the two key departments that supposedly provide the advice. It is as if Canada is using the Canadian Forces to gain favour with the U.S. on trade and other non-military issues by providing forces for its Foreign Policy requirements.

The sixth factor related to decision-making concerns the sphere of influence of the media and public opinion. This sphere plays an ever increasing role in the decision-making process. As previously stated this is one of the reasons why the government has been centralizing its power. The ability of the media to politicize an issue influences the government's intervention strategy at times more than any other sphere of influence. The opinion polls during Canada's deliberations about whether to participate in the Iraq war showed 55% opposed.[53] Although, the decision not to participate in Iraq is on record as having been due to Prime Minister Chrétien's requirement for a UN resolution, this actual motive has been questioned and was partly influenced by public opinion and the upcoming election in Québec.[54]

[53] Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, 73
[54] ibid., 78

V. FIVE CHANGES TO A MORE INFORMED DECISION

There is no doubt that the current decision-making process can be overly influenced by actors that do not represent the national interest. This influence leads to an inconsistent approach to Canada's intervention decisions in two major ways. First, there is too much power at the centre with regard to decision-making. While it can be argued that the Prime Minister should have the unilateral power to commit forces for interventions, this type of power should only be limited to extreme measures. Committing forces to combat over dinner with a U.S. President without appropriate consultation of the Defence or Foreign Ministers does not pass the checks and balance requirements of a democratic nation. Prime Minister Harper's involvement of Parliament with extending the mission in Afghanistan to 2011 is more realistic of a check and balance decision, even if this particular process was politically motivated.

. Canada prides itself on belonging to multilateral institutions that provide legitimacy to precepts like "Responsibility to Protect". Inconsistent decision-making by government reduces Canada's international credibility. The fact that Foreign Affairs and National Defence do not have an aligned strategy with regard to international affairs reduces the appropriate influence these spheres should have on the decision-making process. This allows other bodies to influence the decision which leads Canada to make an inconsistent approach to interventions abroad.

Addressing this issue of consistency is required if Canadians are to accept future interventions similar to the one on-going in Afghanistan. Given the current support for interventions for humanitarian reasons there is a strong likelihood that similar deployments will occur in the foreseeable future. Ensuring a consistent approach to

decision-making is in place will improve Canada's credibility, demonstrate this nation's true national interests abroad and will ensure that soldiers that place their lives at risk are appropriately resourced. Five proposals are made to allow a more consistent decision-making process:

i. creation of a permanent Cabinet Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence;

ii. creation of a subcommittee Task Force on any crisis requiring intervention;

iii. Parliamentary and Senate reforms to limit possible unilateral decisions being made for interventions other than during national emergencies. This should include as a minimum Parliamentary consultation and debate if not a required vote;

iv. raise education standards for Ministers with respect to international affairs and defence; and

v. raise the public conscious with regard to International Affairs and Defence;

The creation of a permanent Cabinet Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence would help to reduce the increasing power at the centre of the Canadian government. Although Cabinet solidarity and secrecy from a Parliamentary perspective must remain in place, the fact that the Prime Minister has a committee in place to address this issue forces a more consistent process to be in place. While it may be argued that adding another Cabinet committee to an already overworked structure may be difficult, it can also be argued that these types of decisions are too important to not be appropriately

discussed. Forcing the government to make more consistent decisions is also as likely to reduce some of the workload as the process develops and to also help Canadians to see how interventions relate to the national interest.

By ensuring that Foreign and Defence Ministers are forced to meet regularly to address Canada's international foreign and defence strategy and not just when a crisis is looming will put into place a bureaucratic process that will filter through all departments. Both departments will be required to provide common and overlapping strategies to this Cabinet committee that could address long-term outlooks, intervention proposals, position papers within international institutions such as the UN and NATO and ultimately shape the necessary resource requirements. This is proactive decision-making rather than reactive, or at least makes reactive decision-making that much more informed.

The second change to the decision-process would be to institute a subcommittee Task Force at any time there is the possibility of an intervention looming. This would certainly have benefited Rwanda or Darfur. This Task Force, similar to the one recently created for Afghanistan would help to ensure a "whole of government" approach to the intervention crisis.

This subcommittee would follow an established crisis decision-making process that would ensure that recommendations made to Cabinet are informed. The current structure of government has an aversion to major interventions because of potential costs related to the unknowns with respect to required resources and length of time of a commitment and does not appropriately relate interventions to the national interest. In his book, "*Organizing for Foreign Policy Crises*", Patrick Haney researched key performance tasks that should be completed prior to government making any decision to

intervene.[55] Although DFAIT and DND are required to produce a memorandum to Cabinet that outlines specific criteria, the "Whole of Government" approach to producing this information is inconsistent. The task force would help develop a well defined procedure that can provide a more consistent approach so that Cabinet makes a more informed decision.[56]

More importantly, such a Task Force will force the intergovernmental bodies to work together for each crisis, a "whole of government" approach. While Foreign Affairs and Defence may have the lead in developing options for a major intervention, other bodies such as CIDA and the RCMP should be involved given the growing realization of the nation building requirement in most interventions. This has the potential to create buy-in from all players before a general plan is presented to the Cabinet for a decision. This reorganization of the current process would go a long way to providing a more consistent approach from Canada in dealing with multilateral institutions such as the UN and our bilateral partner to the south, the U.S.

The third proposal, reform within the current parliamentary system, should also be considered. While the government of the day must hold some residual decision-making powers in the event of a major emergency, the reality is that none of the interventions conducted by Canada over the last 50 years have required such an immediate decision. If the crisis is urgent, the Prime Minister could have decision powers to allow troops to immediately prepare for interventions. For example, military ships

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[55] Patrick Jude Haney, *Organizing for Foreign Policy Crises: Presidents, Advisers, and the Management of Decision Making* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 126.

[56] Patrick Haney divided the performance of crisis decision-making process into six tasks: survey objective; canvass alternatives; search for information; assimilate and process new information; evaluate costs, risks, and implications of preferred choice; and develop monitoring, implementation, and contingency plans. This is similar to the memorandum to cabinet information discussed earlier in this paper but is more in-depth. The issue as highlighted is the consistency in the approach to assessing the information and ensuring that the appropriate representatives from all of government are involved.

could be authorized to sail to distant locations while Parliament debates the issue. The build up against Iraq during Gulf War I took many months. Mandatory debate within parliament and Senate reform to provide a counterbalancing viewpoint would force the government to be more consistent in its approach to defending Canada's national interests.

It could be argued that many of these proposed changes to the Parliamentary system are unrealistic. Given the number of years that Canadians have been discussing Senate Reform, it would be difficult to believe that a permanent cabinet committee could be legislated by the government. Similarly, forcing Parliament to get involved with the debate on intervention will be seen by many as more dangerous and subject to other political issues driving the agenda, such as National Unity.

Indeed the argument will go; current parliamentary laws do not require such a committee. Ironically, the Foreign and Defence committee was the basis of cabinet structure developed during the lead up to and after the Second World War.[57] The number of governments that have instituted a Foreign and Defence or Security cabinet is not consistent. Prime Minister Chrétien did not have such a cabinet committee. The current government under Prime Minister Harper does have such a committee and has only recently instituted a specific Task Force to address issues in Afghanistan. The argument is that it would be naïve to assume that the political will would be in place to legislate such a body as it dictates the form of government that should be in place.

This argument is a bit of a red herring. Consistency in decision-making should be the top priority for any formed government, especially when making decisions to involve troops in major conflicts or when committing resources, personnel and finance to

[57] Savoie, *Governing from the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics*, 27

international development. In this respect, how can any government justify not having a specific cabinet committee to address these important issues? How can the government be afraid to debate the issue in Parliament if the intervention is truly in Canada's interests? If a government does not choose to have a Foreign and Defence cabinet committee or to open interventions to Parliamentary debate, then the citizenry should question the judgment of the government to provide an objective process for intervention.

Many would also argue that imposing a structured decision-making process in government is a lost cause when committing forces to interventions. Given the numerous factors that influence how decisions are made, any additional bureaucratic process is likely to not only meet with resistance but is also likely to just become another layer that is potentially ignored. While no one is in favour of increasing bureaucracy, the fact is that this step of creating a committee and a subcommittee, formed by personnel already in positions within the government, will help create a communication link between the civilian and military relationship; Foreign Affairs and the Department of National Defence primarily. The Manley report made such a recommendation for Afghanistan and i regsfred.Aill that is rquiuredies to-maes these(comm)8(ittesy pe-m)8(n(ent, and to-m)8(a)-1(es)]TJ0.0001

There is no disagreement that Canada has participated in its share of interventions around the world. Unfortunately this nation will likely be asked to do more, not less, in the future. It is to the future, therefore, that one must consider how we are going to intervene and improve the decisions to do so. These changes to the process will provide a more consistent approach with respect to Canada's national interests. It will provide more credibility for the nation in the eyes of the public and on the international stage. It will also ensure more responsible management for the troops to ensure that they have the appropriate equipment and training before they go on a mission. By involving the government in a proactive manner, Canadians will also have a more clear understanding of what the nation is getting involved in and the media will not be able to "run amuck" with hypotheses and criticisms which further influence public thinking.

In concert with government reforms is the requirement to ensure that our ministers are better educated in the matter of defence and international affairs. The absence of understanding of issues by Ministers is striking, and although the Department of National Defence has taken steps to expose our politicians to military issues, it is only being conducted at the superficial level. The fact that Canadian politicians are really only concerned with the concept of statesmanship after they have been elected mainly on issues of domestic politics is telling. One method is to send senior public servants from applicable departments on the National Security Studies programme which would raise the awareness of individuals who directly advise their ministers. Requiring that Ministers should have some educational background in International Studies in order to be appointed may be more problematic; however, key Cabinet members should be appointed based on their background and their experience in the appropriate field.

The fifth proposal for improving the decision-making process is to address the influential nature of the media and popularity polls. As the author John Ralston Saul argues in his book, *The Unconscious Civilization*, the average citizen does not participate in the important issues affecting the nation. According to Mr. Saul, the fault lies directly with our educational system which is more focused on a business and technical background rather than a liberal one.[58] This is a systemic problem that can only be addressed by changing the culture of Canada's educational system.

While many will argue that this is an idealistic dream, the fact remains that a proper reform in our educational system will awaken the consciousness of the citizen. This is the critical link that is missing between the media and the politicians. An informed public will be able to better understand the issues and help to shape Canadian Foreign Policy during elections. Politicians will not be as concerned about the politicization of issues by the media if the public is better informed. Transparency in government decision-making demands a certain responsibility on the part of the citizen to participate and be involved.

Disagreement to these proposals would likely be concerned with the educational requirements of both the Ministers and the general public school system. A more liberal education does not assume that the citizens of the country are going to be more involved or more informed in political issues than they already are since personal motivation guides these interests. Demanding that certain key Ministers in Cabinet be appointed partially based on appropriate education requirements would likely also be considered to be going too far.

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[58] John Raulston Saul, *The Unconscious Civilization* (Toronto, ON: Anasi Press Ltd., 1995), 33.

There is no question that the changes proposed in this paper are not going to occur overnight. Changing the culture of a nation is no small task. As an example, despite years of policy making, policy enforcing, and an incredible amount of financing, Canada is still not a truly bilingual nation. However, there has been a large improvement and change in the Canadian psyche that would indicate that progress in this area has been and is being made. There are certainly more high school students today that are bilingual than ten years ago. Similarly, changing the public education system and demanding that Foreign Ministers in cabinet come to the position with some kind of international affairs background will take time.

Undoubtedly many will be of the view that the politicization of issues by public opinion and the media will never change, even with a more educated and informed populace, and is one of the cornerstones of a liberal democracy. Perhaps, but it can also be argued that allowing our politicians to continue to be coerced by the media will continue to make the government less transparent. Committing troops to potential combat missions demands informed decision-making that can only come from an educated government and society that is not unduly influenced by a biased and headline seeking media.

VI. CONCLUSION

Canada is a secure nation relative to many others around the world in large part because of its geographic position and proximity to the United States. Traditionally, Canada has had to worry more about domestic issues in ensuring the protection of its national interests, and in national unity, than in dealing with conflicts against other countries. As a result of the alliance with the American hegemony, Canada is not

compelled to develop a globalist foreign policy but chooses to do so based upon internationalist values. Contributing to the coalition of the willing or to multilateral interventions is often done in the political light of maintaining and ensuring the success of our national interests and has often justified providing just enough or minimal resources.

Traditionally Canada has not been required to make informed decisions with regard to interventions due to its standing commitments with NATO and the nature of UN peacekeeping missions. It assumes that the international bodies, by endorsing the commitment, have already undertaken the "informed decision-making" process. Since the 1990s, this requirement has changed and the decision-making process used by government to commit forces to hostile regions is inconsistent and does not provide the transparency required in a responsible democracy.

By examining the seven spheres of influence the inconsistency in government decision-making becomes more evident. Six central factors emerge from this analysis. First, that the United States is a dominating sphere of influence in the decision-making process which supports the "maintenance" theory of our national interests with respect to the hegemony. Second, Ministers do not have the educational background to make informed decisions on the international scene and can therefore be more easily influenced. Focused on domestic politics to get elected, most arrive in Cabinet with little or no training in international or defence issues. Third, our government has become very powerful at the centre due to increased media and politicization of issues to the point where unilateral decisions are being made. This allows for inconsistent decision-making. Fourth, National Defence and Foreign Affairs are not always aligned in their approach to

global affairs, mostly due to Cold War approaches to security. This misalignment does not allow a "whole of government" approach to be developed and does not provide the government with a unified plan from what should be the most influential sphere in the decision-making process. Fifth, the U.S. influence extends into multilateral bodies such as NATO and the UN to the extent that it is difficult to tell whose interests one is actually serving, the U.S., the world or simply Canada's. As seen in recent conflicts, if the U.S. is unable to achieve consensus it is willing to develop a coalition of the willing or, if required, act unilaterally. This diminishes the concept of multilateralism and demonstrates once again the influence of the U.S., even indirectly, on Canada's intervention decision-making. Sixth, the influence of the media to politicize events skews the consistency in the decision-making process. In many respects the citizen has abrogated his responsibility to be informed on issues to hold the government accountable.

From these conclusions, five recommendations are made to improve the consistency in government decision-making and more importantly to re-engage the citizen to be more involved. While these recommendations may be regarded as idealistic and unattainable, the fact is that two of the recommendations have been utilized by the current government. It, in fact, formed a Foreign Affairs and Security cabinet committee and created a specific Task Force for Afghanistan as a recommendation from the Manley panel. The maintenance of these two concepts in government to better align intergovernmental departments and take a more proactive position with regard to future interventions would therefore be easily accomplished.

Instituting mandatory debate in Parliament and Senate reform as a counterbalance to decision-making is more problematic but should nevertheless be pursued. Leaving the

government to make potential unilateral decisions in committing troops to combat when the country is promoting tertiary internationalist interests rather than protecting a vital interest is not logical. Increased debate in government will improve the consistency in decision-making and provide for a more informed public.

As citizens of a democracy, there is a responsibility that comes with the privilege of living in a free society such as Canada. As a minimum, the nation must be more involved when deciding to send troops in harms way. Better education standards in public schools that address shortfalls in liberal education will help to provide better educated ministers in Cabinet and to diminish the 30 second sound byte politicization of decision-making. While this is a long term project, the reality is that Canada has been involved in missions around the globe since its inception in 1867. The world is unlikely to become more stable anytime soon and Canada will continue to be called upon to help resolve conflicts and aid in reconstruction.

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