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The citizen's role in defining policy:

A case for public consultation in the development of a National Security Policy for Canada in the 21st Century

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Abstract

The government of Canada has indicated its intention to undertake reviews of the Defence and the Foreign Policies in 2002. Both the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have indicated the intent to consult, to some degree, with the public in the development of these policies.

The Standing Senate Committee on Security and Defence has recommended the development of a National Security Policy. The last time that Defence and Foreign Policies were reviewed in concert with each other was 1994.

This paper examines the effectiveness of the 1994 Defence and Foreign Policy reviews and the value of public consultation in those reviews. The Australian government has recently published a Defence White Paper that was developed with public consultation. The United States is considering developing a Security Policy based on another type of consultation.

This paper will propose a method of developing a National Security Policy for Canada that builds on the results of the 1994 reviews and the lessons from the Australian success.

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Security for Canada

Canada's *national security* has long been taken for granted by Canadians when they discuss foreign policy, defence policy and their armed forces. Prior to 11 September 2001, like most of their American counterparts, Canadians took their domestic security and their national security for granted. Except for brief periods of heightened awareness to security and defence matters such as at the start of the Cold War in the 1950s, and during the Cuban missile crisis in the 1960s, the FLQ crisis in 1970 and the Oka crisis in 1990, defence and security have not figured prominently in the concerns of most Canadians in the latter half of the last century. In fact, other than during the two world wars, it has generally only been special interest groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs)¹ and academics that have raised the issue of defence and security and then only for brief periods of time. Health care, the economy, women's issues, aboriginal issues and the environment have figured more prominently than defence and security for most of the past 40 years.

¹ The term NGO is used extensively when referring to many different types of organizations that do not form part of a national government or bureaucracy. In this essay, the term NGO will be used to describe any group (as opposed to individual) that represented a collective point of view of the organization and that was not directly affiliated with the government. A case could be made that some organizations, such as the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada (AIAC) was not a NGO but was a lobby group. Similarly, groups that were funded, in whole or in part by the government, while not being governmental organizations, may not in fact be acting as impartial participants in the process. Thus, it is possible to deduce that the only true NGOs are those that act as neither a lobby for members who stand to benefit financially nor receive any government funding for their research and point of view. For the purpose of this essay, no attempt will be made to discriminate between funded, independent or lobbyist NGOs.

However, with greater Canadian Forces involvement in non-traditional peace support operations globally and with the events of 11 September 2001, Canadians are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of national security and the need for their government to have and articulate a policy that both rationalizes their involvement in peace support missions abroad and their commitments to the security of Canada as a nation and partner on the North American continent. This was probably no more clearly stated than in the fifth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, in which the Committee concludes:

*“Given the importance of National Security issues, and the need to have procedures and policies in place before incidents happen, the Committee recommends that a study be undertaken to develop a National Security Policy, which will examine the roles of all levels of government.”*²

This paper will demonstrate that public consultation was effective in the development of the 1994 Defence White Paper and propose an approach for consultation for future reviews aimed at developing *National Security Policy*.

Dewitt and Leyton-Brown define *national security* as the protection and preservation of a nation’s values, institutions and the well being of its citizens.³ As a nation however, Canadians tend to focus on short-term issues and goals. To be effective, the investment in security and defence requires long-term vision and the ability to “stay the course” especially during an era of unprecedented change and complexity. This vision needs to be reflected in a *National Security Policy* developed “by the people, for the people.”

As he states in his summary of the last defence review conducted in 1994, William Weston⁴ believes that, given that the useful life of a government is only at best

² Canada. “Canadian Security and Military Preparedness” Fifth Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Security and Defence, February 2002, Part II (B), Para 7.

³ Dewitt, David B and Leyton-Brown, David, eds. *Canada’s International Security Policy*. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1995. p. 3.

⁴ Weston, William. “The Canadian Defence Policy Review” *Proceedings of Annual Seminar: Canadian Strategic Forecast 1995*. Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1995. p. 30.

three years, some process must be developed and institutionalized which allows for a more comprehensive approach to developing enduring national security policy than exists today.

*“...there is a widespread assumption, based more on intuition than systematic evidence, that Canadians as a whole are not interested in international affairs. They are, in this view, insular and inward-looking, more concerned with domestic interests.”*⁵

Indeed, within the hallowed halls of the Ottawa bureaucracies, there is a widely held opinion that public consultation is a waste of time and that if they undertake to consult with the public, they will not hear anything new because “...we’ve heard it all already during our careers...we already know what’s best for Canada...”

This popular perception is not supported by public opinion polls that suggest the opposite. While, one must be careful not to draw the wrong conclusions based on results obtained by polling alone, when asked about their interests in world affairs, Canadians are prone to indicate a relatively high degree of interest as reported by a poll commissioned by the Department of National Defence in 1992.⁶ Their interest is both broad and deep (although breadth and depth of knowledge may not both be present in the same individuals). Canadians’ individual and collective interests in international affairs are due in no small part to their cultural mosaic and multicultural heritage. While there is a school of thought that believes the events of 11 September 2001 may serve to energize an interested public into action, shaping Canada’s security policy, the enduring impact remains to be seen.

In its five sections, the paper will offer, in turn, an overview of security policy and consultation considerations; an account of the experiences with consultation in a Canadian defence and foreign policy context in the pre-1994 timeframe; an analysis of the experience of the 1994 defence and foreign policy reviews; a discussion of the

⁵ Nossal, Kim Richard. The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy. Third Edition. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1997. p. 98.

⁶ *ibid* p. 98.

approaches taken by two other Allies in similar reviews; and finally, a proposal for consultation in the upcoming defence and foreign policy reviews.

Security Policy and Consultation

Dewitt and Leyton-Brown define *Security Policy* as “...a lens or filter through which foreign policy informs defence policy.”⁷ They go on further to state that while a nation’s foreign policy encompasses such elements as the national foreign agenda, the nation’s priorities for international affairs, and, inevitably, a statement of its national interests; a nation’s defence policy is much more focused on military responses to threats to global peace or national sovereignty. Security policy brings the two together by placing peace and security issues in the context of national interests and the domestic agenda. In this way, it can be seen that not only does a nation’s defence policy support, and in some cases help to define its foreign policy, but all three (security, foreign and defence) are dynamically inter-related, with security policy being the over-arching determinant. It is through this closely integrated relationship of security policy, foreign policy and defence policy that national agendas, priorities and interests establish military commitments leading to the allocation of resources.

National security can be threatened by means other than military force or civil unrest. In the era of globalization, actions and practices that affect commerce, trade, culture and the effectiveness of governments also pose risks. These new threats require a more tightly integrated response by both the public and private sectors to ensure that a nation’s security is not put at risk through transnational crime, large-scale illegal migration, disregard for the environment and hostile actions of rogue states and non-state actors. According to one senior Canadian official speaking on the goals of Canadian Security policy:

⁷ Dewitt, David B and Leyton-Brown, David, eds. Canada’s International Security Policy. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1995. p. 3.

*“Canada’s security concerns are three-fold. First it is the encouragement of a stable, prosperous world community. Second, it is the pursuit of national security interests, defined as the protection and enhancement of Canadian sovereignty in an increasingly interdependent world. Third, security policy is concerned with the protection and enhancement of Canada’s international economic competitiveness.”*⁸

These issues are identified as priorities in more detail in both the Defence White Paper that was released in 1994⁹ and the foreign policy statement that was released in 1995.¹⁰ It is within this context of national security policy that the value of public consultation will be discussed.

Dewitt and Leyton-Brown identify seven determinants of a security policy for Canadians.¹¹ In summary, Canada must synchronize political skills and interest,

⁸ *ibid* p. 4. Cited by Dewitt and Leyton-Brown: *Comment by a Canadian official for International Security and Arms Control Bureau, External Affairs and International Trade Canada, at the Eight Annual Ottawa Verification Symposium, “Towards Helsinki 1992: Arms Control in Europe and the Verification Process,” organized by York University’s Centre for International and Strategic Studies at Montebello, Quebec, March 1991.*

⁹ Canada. Department of National Defence. 1994 Defence White Paper. Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 1994. pp. 3-8.

¹⁰ Canada. Department of External Affairs. Canada in The World. Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 1995. p. ii.

¹¹ See Dewitt, David B and Leyton-Brown, David, eds. Canada’s International Security Policy. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1995. p.18. Authors offer seven key factors which must be considered when developing a security policy that will inform a defence policy:

- (1) Define the threat in terms of what, who, and why. There are vastly differing views of the strategic environment within which Canada will exist. The assessment must be projected out 15 years if capital equipment programs are to reflect future needs.
- (2) Identify the source of the threats or risks. In the bi-polar context of the Cold War, the where was defined for us, both politically and geographically. The “where” has become far less significant as asymmetric threats, including terrorism, exists virtually everywhere.
- (3) Identify the role of armed force in mitigating any or all of the perceived threats. Within the vague strategic environment of the early 21st century, the role of armed forces will continue to evolve. The role of armed forces and paramilitary forces defending within Canada may increase.
- (4) Identify the non-warfighting roles that can be played by the military in addressing the threats. Greater use is being made of armed forces in responding to disasters both natural and accidental; both within Canada and internationally.
- (5) Identify the bilateral and multilateral relationships that can contribute to security. The economic prosperity of this nation will be a function of their trading relationships. These will, in turn, depend on formal agreements and membership in international trade and economic bodies.
- (6) Identify commitments first, and then force structure and equipment. There is a tendency to jump right to the conclusion and propose force structure solutions that meet economic constraints rather than defining commitments and tasks.
- (7) Serve as a model through training and assistance programs. Canada can contribute by serving as an example of what can be done by a middle power. Thus, any Canadian response must be

technological and economic capacity and military and diplomatic track record to develop an overarching framework in which all government policies affecting security can address the determinants. Military power and will are not enough; nor is unilateralism. Sound security policy will be the result of sound domestic, foreign and defence policies functioning together in a multilateral world, where partners are determined by national values, interests and objectives, not by chance. It is therefore based on the public's understanding of these factors and their impact on national security that consultation must be considered.

In deciding whether to consult with the public in developing policy, governments must be clear on their motivations. In his paper on the role of NGOs and public consultation on the security policy process,¹² Stairs offers six possible reasons to engage in more than superficial consultation. While, as Stairs suggests, one goal of public consultation is to disarm the critics of the ensuing policy by leaving the impression that consultation took place, regardless of whether it did in reality, the ultimate goal, in all

balanced not only by the impact of the response, but also by the impression that the response will leave.

¹² Stairs, Denis. The Future of Canadian Security and Defence Policy: NGO's Public Consultations and the Security Policy Process. Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University. pp. 1-4. Stairs offers six possible purposes to be served by consultation; all, ultimately aimed at "disarming the critics":

- (1) Cosmetic consultation to by offering the appearance of privileged access to policy makers, regardless of whether or not the input is used. In this manner, the government can at least say that the public and interested organizations were given the opportunity to provide their input.
- (2) Persuasive consultation through familiarization briefings in advance of the release of policy. The public and organizations are convinced of the value and rationale for a policy and therefore both feel that they have been consulted and, give the government the impression that they agree.
- (3) Divisive consultation whereby a government consults with groups or individuals known to have opposing or at least dissimilar views on a subject. It demonstrates to critics, and other members of the public, that others have different points of view to themselves and that there may be some support to the government's position.
- (4) The "Plant" or "articulate supporter" is used as a proxy to convince the public that an idea is good. With this as a backdrop, a policy is released and the government uses this expert's opinion to explain and justify why it has such a good idea.
- (5) Trial Balloons represent a type of reverse consultation. Before a policy is formally released, a draft of the salient points are leaked or officially released, ostensibly not for comment but also with the recognition that the policy is still under development. If the government is truly seeking a consultative input, then if carefully orchestrated, it can get critical feedback to policy proposals.
- (6) Sympathy can be used effectively if governments can build on the supportive relationships between policies and communities to build a mutually supportive bond. This works particularly well with affiliated policies such as those affecting veterans and national defence or fisheries and agriculture but may be less effective between, for example, defence and agriculture.

cases, should be to influence the development of the right policy for the constituents. Stairs stresses two principal conclusions:¹³ first, governments and politicians need to be forthright and honest and not hide the purpose of consultation. Whether immediate or not, the public will find out if the consultation was sincere or merely a ruse. More damage will be done by illegitimate consultation than by avoiding consultation all together. Second, the method and scope of consultation must fit the circumstances. There is little value in consulting on subjects that are not well understood by the constituent. Therefore, those being consulted must both be motivated and informed of the subject matter being discussed. Similarly, there is no value in consulting if the subject cannot be modified by the process or output of consultation. The work of politicians and bureaucrats is different and must be kept separate. In a democracy, the political side of the government relies on some degree of consultation to ensure that its policies reflect its peoples' wishes. The bureaucrats implement the policy. In practical terms, authorities must be careful to avoid building false expectations of outcomes. Consultations can only go so far and that limit will be dependent on the circumstances and nature of the policy being developed.

Polling is a longstanding means of determining public opinion and therefore has become a much more common practice of late. Coupled with the introduction of telephonic polling and now internet-based systems, polling and surveys have become a way of life. That said, polling is a very crude method of "consultation" because it often fails to engage the subject audience on what is important but rather follows the agenda of the consultant. Polling is subject to many pitfalls and can only serve as one indicator of public opinion when dealing with a subject as complicated as national security. Finan and Flemming¹⁴ surmise that that measuring public opinion on something as complex as defence and security is particularly challenging, mostly because the subject does not lend itself to "agree/disagree/no opinion" answers. By its nature, and given the

¹³ *ibid* pp 5-6

¹⁴ Finan, J.S. and Flemming, S.B. "Public Attitudes Toward Defence and Security in Canada." Chapter 12 Canada's International Security Policy. Eds. David B. Dewitt and David Leyton-Brown. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1995. p. 292.

interdependencies of defence, foreign affairs, economics and social policies, the subject is technical and high emotions will prevail. Thus, they challenge the popular belief that polling is an accurate method of gauging public opinion and soliciting public input in debates. In his comprehensive study of polling,¹⁵ Herbert Asher identifies seven problem areas with which both pollsters and the public need to be familiar if meaningful results are to be discerned.

As an alternative to traditional polling techniques, Asher advocates the use of focus groups¹⁶ as part of the process to determine opinions and to shape policies. While he examines the use of focus groups to tailor political campaigns and platforms, the same methods can be used to develop policy frameworks. The main purpose of focus groups in policy development is to narrow the scope so that the developers need only concentrate on what is relevant to the public. To be effective, focus groups must be relatively small, between 10 and 20 people, and varied in their demographic make-up. In using focus groups to support policy development, Asher recommends using a three-phase approach. First, the participants are made aware of the issues by an unbiased coordinator of the policy review. This information phase would identify the issues and, if necessary, trade-

¹⁵ Asher, Herbert. Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know. Washington: Congressional Quarterly Inc, 1998. Asher identifies and analyses seven major problem areas associated with polling and suggests how these should be addressed by pollsters and the public:

- (1) *The prevalence of non-attitudes* Questions must be relevant to the audience and that relevance must be conveyed and understood.
- (2) *Wording and context* Questions must both be worded in a manner that is understandable by the respondent and he or she must know the basis for the question.
- (3) *Sampling* The size of the sample must be large enough to be representative but not so large as to be unattainable in a short period of time. The sample must also be demographically representative if there may be demographic variations.
- (4) *Procedures* The impact of interviewing procedures is among the most difficult to assess. Their effectiveness varies almost individually based on personal preference and the time factor involved in responding.
- (5) *Media treatment of results* The media plays an important role in shaping the public's view of the results of a specific poll and its propensity to participate in another poll in the future.
- (6) *Polls and Elections* While not directly related to policy making, the results of polling in support of electioneering are important. As people find that they can influence politicians or aspirants through polls, they can use it to their advantage to eventually influence policies in the future.
- (7) *Analysis and Interpretation* Ideally, the same analysis techniques will be repeated for a series of polls and, the results can be duplicated. However, because polling is an imprecise science, duplicating results, even with the same sample of respondents, is often not possible.

offs and impacts of any decisions that may be made. Following the information session, participants would discuss the issues freely, expressing their points of view that emerge from the cross-section of society that they represent. Finally, a draft “policy framework” would be developed that would incorporate the dominant ideas from the discussion. Participants would be free to comment and refine this draft but basically, the framework would form the basis of detailed policy development by the bureaucrats. Asher cautions that focus groups are not necessarily nationally representative, especially in a country as vast and regionally disparate as Canada. Thus, it may be necessary to undertake the process several times, across the country, to capture the regional biases of the participants. In the development of security policy therefore, focus groups can be particularly useful in narrowing the issues to be discussed in the public consultation or in developing the pre-consultation discussion paper(s) that could shape the consultative process. The underlying premise in using focus groups in this manner is that there is common agreement on certain fundamentals (eg. that Canada needs an armed force to implement some aspects of its security policy). If the participants cannot agree on certain fundamentals, no amount of discussion will lead to a meaningful discussion paper.

In summarizing the role to be played by public consultation in the formulation of security policies, the government must answer four basic questions prior to embarking on such an initiative. First, it must be clear about what it hopes to achieve through consultation. Second, it must be clear on what aspects of the policy it will open up to consultation. Third, it must decide with whom it will consult (i.e. Who is “the public?”). And finally, it must decide how the process will be shaped. Without this clarity, consultation will be hollow and aimless and the resulting policies may just as well have been developed by the bureaucrats in isolation, avoiding wasting time and effort with consultation.

¹⁶ *ibid* pp. 114-116.

Pre-1994 Experiences

The Canadian government has a fundamental responsibility for the formulation of security policy. In the new international environment, the task of developing security policy has been made much more complex. More than ever before, Canada is affected by what occurs elsewhere in the world. In his essay on Canada's evolving place in global security¹⁷, Dewitt argues that Canadians understand security policy to be much more than defence because they understand that international security not only includes threats to their sovereignty, but also challenges to peace and well-being the world over. He supports Stairs' thesis¹⁸ that Canadians favour multilateralism and want to have a say not only in how Canada's responsibilities are pursued abroad, but also with whom. That said, it does not appear that Canadians were very active in influencing policy development in the pre-1994 defence or foreign policy reviews.

In his article on how policy is developed in Canada,¹⁹ Reford explains the normal processes, players and environment that characterize democracies. Theoretically, every Canadian should be able to influence Canadian policy. However, to many, the government has become so large and powerful that it no longer truly represents the people. He contends that, no matter what party wins an election, it is only a matter of time before it becomes a faceless bureaucracy in which the electorate takes a second place to the bureaucrats. Reford suggests that the basic method for Canadians to influence policy is through elections.

That said, in the 15 general elections since 1945, national security has only been important twice: in 1957, following the 1956 Suez crisis, when the electorate was split

¹⁷ Dewitt, David. "Directions in Canada's International Security Policy." *International Journal* Volume LV, No 2, Spring 2000, Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, pp. 170-171.

¹⁸ Stairs, Denis. "Will and Circumstance and the PostWar Study of Canada's Foreign Policy." *International Journal* Volume L, No 1, Winter 1994-95, Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, pp. 9-39.

¹⁹ Reford, Robert W. "The Public and Public Policy: The Impact of Society on the Canadian Security Process" *Chapter 13 of Canada's International Security Policy*. Eds. David B. Dewitt and David Leyton-Brown. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1995. pp. 312-313.

over the Liberal government's failure to support Britain; and in 1963 when the Conservative government fell due to its indecisiveness on the nuclear basing question in response to the Cuban missile crisis. In both cases, other issues dominated and precipitated the elections; however, defence and security may well have been the "last straw" when it came to the voters.

Four groups influence policy development in Canada: members of parliament, parliamentary committees, national organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).²⁰ Members of Parliament (MPs) are the people's representatives in government. As such, in theory they reflect the points of view of their constituents and by extension, they will influence policy as dictated by their electorate. Phone calls, e-mails, letters and Constituency Offices will tell the MP what is on the minds of the people that he or she represents, and therefore they may be considered a form of public consultation. The flaw with this logic is that it is only vocal constituents with something to say, and the time to say it, that contact their elected representatives. More often than not, members of Parliament hear not from those in favour of something being done by government but from those opposed. Similarly, the diminished role of backbenchers contributes to their ineffectiveness in influencing policy decisions. It is only through committees of the House of Commons or the Senate that they have the opportunity to influence policymaking.

Prior to the 1994 policy reviews, the government did not have much experience in open consultation on defence or foreign policy matters. The experience that did exist was predominantly in the foreign policy realm and it was limited to closed or restricted consultation with NGOs and strategic "think tanks", some funded by the government and others privately funded. In his extensive examination of the subject,²¹ Canadian Foreign Policy: Old Habits and New Directions, Andrew Cooper provides an excellent chronology of the factors that influenced Canadian Foreign Policy development in the

²⁰ *ibid* pp. 313-320.

latter half of the last century. Early in this period, foreign policy was developed, and in fact implemented, very much behind the closed doors of the Department of External Affairs.²² It was a closely-knit group of officials within DEA who made the policies that would shape Canada's place on the world stage. Cooper contends that it was not until the Trudeau period that foreign policy was moved out of the DEA and into the public forum.

In 1970-71, in a rare opportunity to access Parliament, twenty-nine NGOs presented briefings to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence (SCEAND).²³ While it is not clear what impact, if any, these briefings had on the formulation of defence or foreign policy, it was seen as a bold step towards opening the door towards more public consultation. It is worth noting that, in 1972, the Canadian delegation to the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment did include both federal bureaucrats and members of the public. The Stockholm Conference²⁴ is frequently referred to as a watershed for public activism in engaging policy makers, illustrated by the proliferation of domestic environmental protection agencies and laws enacted in the wake of the conference. Whether public participation was a concept whose time had come, or whether it was the fact that the conference was to be chaired by a Canadian, Maurice Strong, of import to this essay is the fact that members of the Canadian public would become engaged in policy matters that affected them. Thus, although not a pure foreign policy conference, the public was seen to be influencing Canada's role in international affairs. While not being taken to the public for policy development, the execution of foreign policy certainly became more visible under Trudeau's leadership. With prime ministerial interest in foreign policy, it did not take long for foreign policy to become politicized.²⁵ Thus, the first step towards consultation

²¹ Cooper, Andrew. Canadian Foreign Policy: Old Habits and New Directions. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1997. pp. 35-65.

²² *ibid* pp. 38-41.

²³ *ibid* p. 64.

²⁴ McDonald, John W. "The U. N. Conference on the Human Environment." International Negotiation Journal. Volume 1, No.2, September 1996,

²⁵ Cooper, Andrew. Canadian Foreign Policy: Old Habits and New Directions. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1997. pp. 43-52. Cooper contends that the shift from the Pearsonian style of Foreign Affairs and diplomacy exercised by DEA occurred as a result of three factors: First, Trudeau's distrust of the Canadian

in foreign policy was to open it to the purview of the Prime Minister's Office and Privy Council Office.

However, it was not until the mid-1980s that public consultation would be addressed. Whether it resulted from Canadians wanting a greater say in international trade, by their demands for more accountability in the management of foreign aid, or their opposition to cruise missile testing, 1986 marked a turning point from the era of bureaucratic "we know best" to democratized policy development. The release of the Mulroney government's Green Paper marked a shift towards "democratizing" Canadian Foreign Policy²⁶ when Joe Clark was the Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA). Mr. Clark established a Special Joint Parliamentary Committee (SJPC) of the House of Commons and Senate to measure the views of Canadians and make recommendations on foreign policy.²⁷ This committee received briefs from 630 individuals and 568 organizations including NGOs, businesses and special interest groups. Former Director General of Policy Staff, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, David Malone described the results as "*comprehensive but not particularly forward-looking...completely divorced from the department's and the government's resource allocation process.*"²⁸ While far from revolutionary, the ensuing White Paper did include many of the results of the consultation process.

The making of defence policy in the period from 1945 to 1994 was even less public than that of foreign policy. As Middlemiss and Sokolsky conclude²⁹ when analyzing the policy-making environment within the government, defence policy

Diplomatic Corps because it was poorly managed, unrepresentative and out of touch with reality. Second, the role that the provinces wanted to play in defining their relationships internationally, especially as it affected trade and immigration. And finally, the "externalisation of 'domestic' government departments." That is to say the interdependency of departments previously viewed as having no external influence was now being seen to be affected by Foreign Policy.

²⁶*ibid* pp. 62-63.

²⁷ Malone, David. "Foreign Policy Reviews Reconsidered." International Journal Volume LVI, No 4, Autumn 2001, Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, p. 560.

²⁸ Malone, David. "Foreign Policy Reviews Reconsidered." International Journal Volume LVI, No 4, Autumn 2001, Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, pp. 561.

decisions were taken by the political executive and presented to Parliament with no discussion or debate. Only in limited circumstances was approval sought for decisions, and then most often to legitimize decisions rather than to discuss issues. While committees of the House of Commons and the Senate that have been dedicated to defence matters have existed since before the Second World War, their work had been very much issue rather than policy oriented. It was not until 1968 that the Foreign Affairs and Defence were married under the same House of Commons Standing Committee – SCEAND. This marriage lasted nearly 20 years, until the two portfolios were again split, one to deal with external affairs and the other defence. As Middlemiss and Sokolsky point out, the divorce was not significant because the standing committees wielded little influence and had not established themselves as major players.³⁰

In summarizing the role of the Canadian public in defence policy development, they point out that while peace and public-interest groups opposed nuclear roles for Canada in the 1960s and 70s, and cruise missile testing in the 1980s, they lacked the activism of other western nations. It was not until the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in 1982, and the renewal of the NORAD agreement and the proposed Strategic Defence Initiative in 1985 that constituency groups, both in favour and opposed, became engaged in the process and were permitted to address the SCEAND.³¹ While far from free and open consultation, the appearance at these committees by members of the public, be they in favour of or opposed to the proposals being discussed, marked the turning point in the public's ability to influence defence policy. The government recognized this and embarked on a process to educate Canadians on defence matters, based on the premise that an informed public would be in a better position to indicate how it wanted its government and armed forces to develop defence policies.³² While chronically under-funded and sometimes accused of having too much of a pro-defence

²⁹ Middlemiss, D.W. and Sokolsky, J.J. Canadian Defence: Decisions and Determinants. Toronto, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1989. p.96

³⁰ *ibid.* p.99.

³¹ *ibid.* p.123.

³² *ibid.* p.130-132.

bias, government funded and private centres for strategic study have been useful in educating the public and they laid the foundation for the 1994 policy reviews.

Thus, while Canada's experiences in public consultation were very limited between 1945 and 1994, they reflected a maturing nation and a population becoming interested and willing to participate in the formulation of policy. Pressures on the government to exhibit more transparency, coupled to a more informed and educated constituency, could not help but lead to open public consultation in the 1994 policy reviews.

The 1994 Experience

Prior to its election in 1993, the Liberal Party published a *Red Book*,³³ which essentially outlined the policies that would be adopted should it be elected to power. This included the establishment of The National Forum on Canada's International Relations³⁴ to determine what type of defence and foreign policy Canadians wanted. This forum brought together more than a hundred prominent Canadians representing a broad spectrum of academics, journalists, industrialists and other experts. Its role was to set the stage for the foreign and defence policy reviews that were being conducted concurrently. In addition to the National Forum, the government had promised a more thorough review of defence and foreign policies. These reviews were initiated by way of debate in the House of Commons in early February 1994; however, shortly thereafter, two Special Joint Committees (SJC) of the House of Commons and the Senate were established to support the development of both a new defence policy and a new foreign policy.³⁵

In his guidance document issued to the SJC(Defence), the then Minister of National Defence David Collenette, directed “...*the widest participation of interested*

³³ Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada (Ottawa: Liberal Party of Canada, 1993)

³⁴ Stairs, Denis. “The Public Politics of the Canadian Defence and Foreign Policy Reviews,” Canadian Foreign Policy, Spring 1995, Ottawa: Canadian Foreign Policy Publishing Group, pp. 101-103.

³⁵ For simplicity, these will be referred to SJC(Defence) and SJC(Foreign).

Canadians, as well as experts and organizations.”³⁶ In his opening remarks to the committee on 24 February 1994, Minister Collenette suggested that, because of the overlap of the mandates of the two SJC’s, they consult closely and, that where appropriate, joint SJC sessions be held.³⁷ It is important to note that during their seven months of deliberations, records show that the committees met together only three times, each time being *in camera*. Indications are that these three sessions were to: agree on a delivery timetable for tabling their final reports and, late in their deliberations to ensure that the two committee reports would not contradict each other.³⁸ Both committees were to report back to the House by the end of September 1994, their findings and recommendations being considered during the development of the Defence and Foreign Policy White Papers by the end of the year. This was to be the first time that both chambers of government and the Canadian public would be consulted in a policy review of this nature.

In the case of the SJC(Defence), Minister Collenette provided extensive technical and operational support to the committee during the seven months of deliberations. A three-member team of Colonel/Navy Captain rank representatives from the three services coordinated the Department’s involvement in the review.³⁹ While the primary role of the team was to provide military expertise to the Committee members, a secondary benefit was to keep Departmental authorities advised of the concerns of the Committee and, to some degree, conduct “damage control.”

³⁶ Canada. Forward to “Review of Canadian Defence Policy Guidance Document” signed by Hon D.M. Collenette, Minister of National Defence, February 1994.

³⁷ Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of thdance

The committee mandate allowed an unprecedented degree of open consultation and access to DND and CF personnel, not limiting discussions and testimony to designated spokespersons. Additionally, SJC(Defence) members benefited from almost unlimited “after duty hours” access to CF members during their visits to military bases in Canada and abroad, including those deployed in the Balkans. Thus, the impression gleaned from unfettered access to the troops may well have contributed to the final report as much as the consultation process itself. During international visits, the CF provided both airlift support and “escort officers” to facilitate dialogue with Allies.

Some 47 public hearings were organized in eleven cities across Canada.⁴⁰ Instead of the previous approach to invite only experts and interest groups to make presentations, the coordinators solicited input from “average Canadians” that wanted to be heard. A combination of invited experts, interested and prepared individuals and *ad hoc* appearances by spectators ensured broad representation and participation by a good cross-section of Canadians. No one was turned away if they wanted to make a presentation or to speak at a hearing.

Just as the public consultation was open and transparent, so was the internal process within DND.⁴¹ The MND personally encouraged internal debate (and some may say competition) among the three services, permitting the environmental commanders to promote their individual visions and desires in an attempt to influence the policy that was being developed, without fear of retribution by “the center.” All of the services took the MND’s encouragement to heart and prepared their individual service visions for both the committee and the interested public.

In reviewing “expert” and “special interest group” presentations of the day, it is obvious that not only did the service chiefs lobby the SJC(Defence) directly, but they also

⁴⁰ Frazer, Jack. “The Canadian Defence Policy Review” Proceedings of Annual Seminar: Canadian Strategic Forecast 1995. Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1995. p. 15.

used the access of NGOs to the SJC to get their points across. It was quite possible, for example, for the air force's desire for an enhanced fighter capability to be transmitted, not only by the Commander of Air Command, but also by the Royal Canadian Air Force Association, the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada and several major aerospace manufacturers. The coordinated approach of serving members and NGOs was probably best demonstrated by advocates of Canada's navy. The Naval Officer's Association of Canada, Atlantic Canada Council, and Dalhousie University Centre for Foreign Policy Studies were but three organizations that buttressed a sound, coordinated case for a strong navy. None of their recommendations contradicted what the Commander of Maritime Command was espousing and, while there were differences, they were all mutually supporting. A well-coordinated campaign, using retired senior officers within each of these organizations could not help but influence the deliberations of the SJC.

The other environments followed the example set by the navy, but some would argue that they were not as successful because of internal "community" biases that came out in presentations. These community biases were characteristic of the CF of the time, and to some degree continue to exist today.⁴² Given that the situation in 1994 was similar to that which exists today in which capabilities would have to be traded off against each other, it is not surprising that not only did inter-service rivalries prevail, but also intra-service rivalries.

From the recommendations of the SJC(Defence), it would appear that these rivalries if anything, worked against the services rather than in favour of them. For example, when lobbying in favour of the air force, retired Lieutenant-General Robert Morton (Royal Canadian Air Force Association), speaking about the importance of anti-submarine warfare (ASW) indicated that ASW "*...is not nearly so much a priority as it*

⁴¹ Frazer, Jack. "The Special Joint Committee." The Canadian Defence Policy Review Proceedings of Annual Seminar: Canadian Strategic Forecast 1995. Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1995. pp. 14-20.

⁴² Within the army, there continues to be a debate over the appropriate balance of combat arms and whether artillery and armour have the same relevance as before. Within the air force, the maritime patrol and surveillance, mobility and fighter communities continue to debate the priorities for resource allocation.

has been in past years.”⁴³ Three months later, appearing as a spokesman for the Conference of Defence Associations (CDA) and trying to support his colleagues in the navy, stated “...*the biggest concern I have ever had has been the presence of submarines in the oceans in the northern hemisphere.*”⁴⁴

Similar contradictory opinions, based on service interests, were expressed in other matters. The CDA suggested, among other things, significantly increased resources for the air force and navy and the closure of Canadian Forces Base Shilo.⁴⁵ The Royal Canadian Artillery Association (RCAA), a member of the CDA objected to these recommendations⁴⁶ and publicly broke the consensus that the pro-defence CDA lobby aimed to achieve. The transcripts of the CDA presentations are replete with examples of contradiction, dissent and uncoordinated testimony. The appearance was again, one of internecine rivalry that undermined the professional legitimacy of the opinions advanced by the CDA.

While Minister Collenette stressed open consultation with individual members of the public, special interest groups, NGOs and blue ribbon panels figured prominently in the review process. Pro-defence, disarmament, and environmental groups all made presentations and submitted papers to the committee. In his summary of the seven major independent reports submitted to the SJC(Defence),⁴⁷ Martin Shadwick compares the basic philosophy, resource and force structure proposals of the Canada 21 Council, Centre Quebecois de Relations Internationales, Centre for Conflict Studies of the University of New Brunswick, Project Ploughshares, Conference of Defence Associations, Royal Canadian Air Force Association and Toronto Artillery Officers’

⁴³ Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Canada’s Defence Policy. Ottawa. Jun 20 1994, Issue No 25. p. 31

⁴⁴ Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Canada’s Defence Policy. Ottawa. 21 Sep 1994, Issue No 29. p. 21

⁴⁵ Canadian Security: A Force Model for the 21st Century Conference of Defence Associations, Ottawa, 1994.

⁴⁶ Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Canada’s Defence Policy. Ottawa. Jun 20 1994, Issue No 25. p. 9

Association. While space does not permit a detailed review of the submissions of, for example: Project Ploughshares,⁴⁸ The Committee of 13,⁴⁹ and The Atlantic Council of Canada,⁵⁰ it can be concluded that, notwithstanding the type of problem described above with the lack of consensus within the CDA, NGOs provided some of the most professionally prepared and delivered presentations and submissions. It was not uncommon for members of the SJC(Defence) to recall NGOs for follow-on clarification or testimony or for the Committee to have multiple, opposing NGOs present at a single session.

Of special note is the prominent initial role played by the Canada 21 Council in the proceedings of both Special Joint Committees. In his opening remarks to the SJC(Defence),⁵¹ Minister Collenette commended the Council's report: Canada and Common Security in the Twenty-First Century⁵² to the committee members, acknowledging that while he did not necessarily endorse the report, he supported the approach of similar groups providing this type of input, noting that the Prime Minister had already been briefed by the Canada 21 Council. This well-connected and highly qualified body of 21 prestigious Canadians, included both a former MND and CDS, was independently financed by a Canadian family trust. This group began its examination of Canada's defence and foreign policy over a year before either review was announced, in advance of the Liberal party's 1993 victory. The Council's intention was to advise whichever party won on a new post-Cold War security policy umbrella for Canada. The combination of exceptional pedigree and lavish private funding contributed to their

⁴⁷ Shadwick, Martin. "Comparison Shopping for a New Defence Policy," Defence Policy Review. Scarborough, 1 September 1994. pp. 1-8.

⁴⁸ Building Peace: New Challenges for Canada's Foreign and Defence Policies, Project Ploughshares, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Waterloo, May 1994.

⁴⁹ Committee of 13: Report on the Review of Canadian Defence Policy, Centre Quebecois de Relations Internationales, Chaire d'Etudes Strategiques de l'Universite de Montreal, Universite Laval, 1994

⁵⁰ Gray, Colin S. Canadians in a Dangerous World. Toronto, 1994

⁵¹ Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Canada's Defence Policy. Ottawa. Mar 16 1994, Issue No 1. p. 15

⁵² Canada 21 Council. Canada 21: Canada and Common Security in the Twenty-First Century. Toronto: Centre For International Studies, University of Toronto, 1994.

credibility, if not their appearance of impartiality.⁵³ Highly publicized and released merely a one month before the SJC began its hearings, the Council's professionally published report⁵⁴ provided the perfect “op-ed” for the committee's purposes and offered alternatives for those who wanted something different but were not sure of what or how different. It proposed the “common security” and “sovereignty” foci, combined with the key concept of “choice”. In the early 1990’s, the Council believed that the Canadian government would have the luxury of declining more violent and dangerous engagements, enabling pursuit of the recently released United Nations Agenda for Peace combining low-intensity peacekeeping with "community building" and "peace building."⁵⁵ Importantly, these lower intensity operations would follow the "cessation of hostilities." The Council envisaged a lightly armed and equipped force that would not participate in high-intensity operations and that would arrive after, rather than during, a conflict.⁵⁶ The timing of the release of the Canada 21 Council report provided an excellent backgrounder not only for both SJs and the National Forum but also for other Canadians who chose to become involved in the consultation process. While Canadians may not necessarily have believed in the recommendations of the Council, the “*Defence Primer*” that the report offered provided an opportunity for at least some informed debate.

Whether by intention or by accident, the Canada 21 Council report soon became the benchmark for the National Forum, the SJC and, in many cases, the public.⁵⁷ Early in the consultation process there were frequent references in the transcripts to witnesses being asked whether they agree with the Canada 21 Council recommendations. Thus, even those participants who had not been aware of many of the issues before the start of

⁵³ Stairs, Denis. “The Public Politics of the Canadian Defence and Foreign Policy Reviews,” Canadian Foreign Policy, Spring 1995, Ottawa: Canadian Foreign Policy Publishing Group, pp. 91-116.

⁵⁴ Canada 21 Council. Canada 21: Canada and Common Security in the Twenty-First Century. Toronto: Centre For International Studies, University of Toronto, 1994.

⁵⁵ *ibid* pp. 53-58.

⁵⁶ *ibid* p. 63.

⁵⁷ Lerhe, Eric and McNeil, Dan. “The Formulation Of Defence Policy – Canada 1994.” presented and discussed at a “Partnership for Peace” Seminar sponsored by the NATO Parliamentary Association at Herstmonceux Castle (Queen’s UK Campus) in the summer of 1995.

the policy review, developed and expressed opinions based on sometimes nothing else but the Canada 21 Council report.

The dominant position of the Canada 21 Council recommendations was eventually usurped, in part due to the attacks by the defence-industrial lobby and the pro-defence groups who saw the elimination of combat fleets in the report's force structure tables⁵⁸ as the elimination of core capabilities. As the SJC(Defence) members became more knowledgeable of current defence issues through exposure to the defence and security community at large, the committee itself began to question some of the assumptions of the report. Emotions and lobbying aside, the one of the principle counter-positions came from John Halstead, an influential former Canadian ambassador to NATO. Halstead presented Canada's recent military accomplishments⁵⁹ to both the National Forum and SJC, bringing the Canada 21 Council report and its supporting assumptions into question. As a result, many of the subsequent witnesses testifying before the SJC(Defence) presented much more moderate approaches than did Canada 21 Council.⁶⁰ During the extensive traveling portion of the SJC consultations, prominent academics were the first to be invited to make presentations and subject them to sometimes extensive questioning. While most academics acknowledged the increasing dominance of peacekeeping, few recommended significant cuts to military capability. Instead, most chose to target the large defence bureaucracy and the excess number of bases as a means of reducing costs. In his paper presented to the foreign policy review committee⁶¹, Denis Stairs challenged the "common security" vision of the Canada 21 Council. While not forming part of the final SJC(Defence) report, this paper was read by

⁵⁸ Canada 21 Council. Canada 21: Canada and Common Security in the Twenty-First Century. Toronto: Centre For International Studies, University of Toronto, 1994. Appendix 2.

⁵⁹ Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Canada's Defence Policy. Ottawa. 27 April 1994, Issue No 5. pp. 5-17.

⁶⁰ Lerhe, Eric and McNeil, Dan. "The Formulation Of Defence Policy – Canada 1994." presented and discussed at a "Partnership for Peace" Seminar sponsored by the NATO Parliamentary Association at Herstmonceux Castle (Queen's UK Campus) in the summer of 1995.

⁶¹ Stairs, Denis. "Contemporary Security Issues." Included as an appendix to Canada's Foreign Policy: Principles and Priorities for the Future. Ottawa. November 1994. Ottawa.

the committee and invariably influenced both committees in their assessment of the future security environment.

The public hearings also attracted special interest groups of a variety of persuasions. “Peace groups” focusing on complete or partial disarmament and withdrawal from NORAD and NATO accounted for 52 appearances by representatives of church, international development, labour, environmental and women's groups. Still, pro-defence groups, although generating fewer presentations, delivered more reasoned and better substantiated points of view, arguing for increased or at least stable defence budgets. The members of the SJC(Defence) often became frustrated at the lack of preparation and lack of knowledge displayed by many of the individual presenters who appeared before the committee. One need only read the transcripts⁶² of the session held in Victoria, 9 May 1994, to note the politesse of the members in dealing with ill-informed witnesses was stretched past its limit in dealing with some individuals and some of the smaller NGOs. While similar situations existed in other public meetings and while there were more isolated exchanges, the committee members managed to at least appear open-minded in their public deliberations.

By the time that the SJC(Defence) had completed its deliberations, it had heard from 841 witnesses and received over 800 written submissions. Turning all of this data into information and knowledge that could form the basis for recommendations by the SJC became a full-time job for the research staff and the military technical advisors. Within DND, in some part influenced by the three-member advisory team, the policy and planning staffs developed the “boiler-plate” for what was to eventually become the defence policy. This parallel process of simultaneous consultation and policy development ensured that bureaucrats were kept in step with politicians and that the policy could be released only a short time after the SJC(Defence) report was finalized.

⁶² Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Canada's Defence Policy. Ottawa. May 9 1994, Issue No 10a.

Just as the Liberal *Red Book* announced a review of defence policy if elected, foreign policy⁶³ was also to be brought under the microscope of the new government. Unlike the 1985 experience in which the review was to have been led by a Green Paper, the 1994 review was merely kicked-off with debate in the House of Commons, followed by the establishment of another SJC to review Canadian Foreign Policy. Andre Ouellet, the new SSEA, launched a process that, without the foundation of a Green Paper, left the SJC(Foreign) to its own devices to define the strategic environment and identify Canada's place and role in the future.

The SJC(Foreign), having been established on 15 March 1994, the first witnesses appearing before it were Pierre Pettigrew and Janice Stein, the co-chairs of the National Forum on Canada's International Relations.⁶⁴ Their opening remarks to the SJC(Foreign) served to provide the committee members with a summary of the issues discussed at the National Forum. It is in these opening comments by Pettigrew and Stein that one finds one of the first references linking foreign policy to defence policy, at a time when two SJCs were meeting simultaneously. Their comments pertaining to defence were limited to sovereignty protection, Canada's penchant for traditional peacekeeping and the diminished military relevance of NATO in the new European environment.⁶⁵ In their 20-minute review of the work of the Forum the co-chairs devoted less than two minutes to the relevance of defence to foreign policy. In acknowledging the work of the Forum and the unique opportunity to consult with academia and NGOs, Stein stressed that Parliament needed to be more involved in developing policies that affect Canada's relationships on the world stage. The first time in the proceedings that defence policy was discussed in any detail was at *Roundtable No 4 on Security and Foreign Policy*, on 3 May 1994.⁶⁶ This session served very much as a synopsis of the more detailed

⁶³ Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada (Ottawa: Liberal Party of Canada, 1993), pp. 105-109.

⁶⁴ Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy. Ottawa. Apr 18 1994, Issue No 2. pp. 5- 11.

⁶⁵ Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy. Ottawa. Apr 18 1994, Issue No 2. p. 10.

⁶⁶ Canada. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy. Ottawa. May 3 1994, Issue No 7. pp. 5- 53.

SJC(Defence) in that it heard from many of the more prominent NGOs without the bother of the fringe groups or individuals.

The results of the foreign policy consultation were disappointing. The SJC(Foreign) heard more than 550 briefs, saw 500 witnesses and commissioned a series of reports by notable experts.⁶⁷ The disappointment came from the fact that the private sector: individual citizens, businesses, education and culture, were loathe to appear, making up less than twenty-five percent of the respondents. Clearly it was a NGO and academia-dominated input that was received by the SJC(Foreign) and, in the minds of critics, including the opposition parties, the review was a failure. In commenting on the final report of the SJC(Foreign), Malone characterizes the report, the added dissenting reports and the background papers in one phrase: “*The essays were much more cogent than anything in the report.*”⁶⁸ In short, the SJC(Foreign) had failed to produce a report that reflected Canada’s role on the world stage, instead, falling victim to partisan politics and dissenting views.⁶⁹

In reflecting on the process and outcomes of the 1994 foreign policy review, Malone reports that consultation is viewed with a great deal of skepticism by academia and the public at large.⁷⁰ Publicly subsidized strategic think tanks such as the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development and Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security suffered from under-funding and confusing mandates. Capable of organizing targeted consultation, they have difficulty organizing broad, public consultation. The results of its efforts in the 1994 review were evident in the ensuing report and foreign policy statements. Furthermore, limited departmental budgets

⁶⁷ Malone, David. “Foreign Policy Reviews Reconsidered.” International Journal Volume LVI, No 4, Autumn 2001, Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, pp. 562-563.

⁶⁸ *ibid* p. 563.

⁶⁹ As addenda to the final report of the SJC(Foreign), both the Bloc Quebecois and Reform Party filed dissenting reports.

⁷⁰ Malone, David. “Foreign Policy Reviews Reconsidered.” International Journal Volume LVI, No 4, Autumn 2001, Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, pp. 574-578.

prevented broad, independent research leaving only those organizations that could garner private funding, usually from biased sources, the ability to influence the ensuing policies.

At this point the influence of the Canada 21 Council on both SJs should be evident. Unsuccessful in dramatically influencing the Defence White Paper, the Canada 21 Council, through the aforementioned National Forum, was successful in downplaying the role of military intervention in the ensuing foreign policy statement favouring the “soft power” approach that was to become the *Axworthy Legacy*. Thus, where the public had failed to become engaged in the foreign policy debate and, where the Canada 21 Council had failed to significantly influence the disarming of the Canadian Forces, a foreign policy was developed not on the basis of public opinion and interest but on the basis of the input of special interest groups and NGOs.

The results of the two SJs, provide a good comparison of approach and determinants of success. While it is impossible to judge whether open public consultation was instrumental in influencing the final report issued by the SJC(Defence), it can be concluded that the report did influence the government’s policy actions. There is an approximately 75 percent correlation between the major recommendations published in the SJC(Defence) final report and the ensuing Defence White Paper.⁷¹ If the

⁷¹ Correlating the major recommendations of the SJC(Defence) Report and the ensuing 1994 Defence White Paper, the following results:

Key Recommendations: Special Joint Committee	Major Points: 1994 Defence White Paper
Unified, combat-capable, sea land and air forces that are properly equipped, able to operate together at home in support of sovereignty and abroad in support of multi-lateral peace and security	Retention of multi-purpose, combat-capable forces that will provide the government with a broad range of military options at a price consistent with the Government’s other policy and fiscal priorities.
Reduce fighter aircraft by at least 25% leaving three operational and one training CF18 squadrons	Fighter expenses will be reduced by 25% by retiring the CF5 and reducing operational CF18 from 72 to between 48 and 60
Increase Regular Force army by 3,500 to meet demand	Approximately 3,000 soldiers will be added to the army’s field force
Maintain current frigates and destroyers	Maintain current fleet and prepare to accept 12 coastal defence vessels

report was based on public consultation, then it can be concluded that the consultation was effective in influencing policy. If, however, the report was merely a fabrication of the research and support staffs and did not reflect the results of consultation, then the process was a failure. Given that the members of the SJC(Defence) represented both Chambers, and that all major political parties were represented, it can be concluded that the report reflected the results of consultation. The Bloc Quebecois dissent⁷² in this case was filed very late in the process and was based not on the results of the

Do not replace submarines unless available within current budget (3-6 used submarines for \$4-6B incl spares)	Explore acquisition of four Upholder class submarines if the budget permits
Priority to modern armoured personnel carriers, new shipborne helicopters and new search and rescue helicopters	Labrador helicopters to be replaced as soon as possible
Improve air and sea transport	Reconfigure VIP Airbus, retain HMCS Provider
Focus Reserve Force on more effective Regular Force Support	Reserves will be reduced to 23,000. Consideration will be given to assigning more service support roles
Reduce number of headquarters by one-third and people in headquarters by 50%	Reduce at least one-third of people and resources in headquarters functions
Disband environmental headquarters and move to a geographical and functional structure	Eliminate one layer of headquarters
Implement “off-the-shelf” procurement and emphasize fleet rationalization	Implement “just-in-time” and “off-the-shelf” procurement approaches
Economize by making posting and relocation more efficient	Military career paths will be restructured to reduce the number of postings and assignments over a career
Make use of short-term contracts, especially combat arms	Place more emphasis on renewable, short-term, periods of service
Do not impair opportunities for advancement for women	Make military careers more attractive to women (<i>plus significant comments on equality</i>)
Task Reserve Forces to match civilian skills to need	<i>Significant comments on role, size and structure for “professionalized” Reserve Force</i>
Pay more attention to cadets	
Create a Standing Joint Committee for defence with regional representation	
Full Parliamentary Debate prior to CF deployment abroad	
Parliamentary scrutiny before any future Defence Policy	
Annual day of debate on Defence Policy	
More information to Parliament on DND capital plan and performance indicators	Changed environment will result in a restructured capital program. Planned acquisitions will be cut by at least 15 billion dollars over 15 years
Regular meetings of MND, CDS and Prime Minister	
Change the name to Department of Defence	

deliberations but on opposition to a “business as usual” approach of the new Liberal Government. Another measure of effectiveness of the two SJs is the issue of dissenting reports, where dissenting reports are an indication of disagreement with the recommendations. In the case of the SJC(Foreign), both major opposition parties, the Bloc Quebecois and the Reform Party, tabled dissenting reports based on major disagreements with the conclusions reached by the SJC(Foreign).

In quantitative terms, the transcripts show that there were more participants in the defence review than in the foreign policy review although fewer locations were visited. There were also more “members of the public” as opposed to “experts” providing their views on defence. In attempting to assess effectiveness, it could be said that the SJC(Defence) was the more effective because it did result in a White Paper⁷³ being produced, although the point could be made that while implicit in the *Red Book* platform and the policy reviews, White Papers were not mandated outputs from the process. In the end, it was a Foreign Policy *Statement*⁷⁴ that was issued and not a White Paper.

Some Other Approaches

The United States Government is in the process of reviewing its own national security policy, an undertaking that commenced before 11 September 2001 but which now has a greater impetus to “get it right.” This is not only the Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR)⁷⁵ that was released late in 2001 but also a matter of overall national security. In the Phase II Report of the United States Commission on National Security/21st Century,⁷⁶ the commission characterized the national security debate as both

⁷² Bloc Quebecois dissenting report.

⁷³ Canada. Department of National Defence. 1994 Defence White Paper. Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 1994.

⁷⁴ Canada. Department of External Affairs. Canada in The World. Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 1995.

⁷⁵ United States. Quadrennial Defence Review Report. Washington: 30 September 2001.

⁷⁶ United States. US Commission on National Security in the 21st Century: Hart-Rudman Commission. Seeking a National Strategy: A Concert for Preserving Security and Preserving Freedom. Washington 15 April 2000.

overdue and urgent; and as an eerie harbinger of events to follow a year after the Commission's first report was published, it warned that:

“The time for reexamination is now, before the American people find themselves shocked by events they never anticipated.”⁷⁷

In their assessment of the global security environment, the commission identified six precepts as a guide to the formulation of a national security strategy and policy.⁷⁸

Of interest in this study is the recognition that public support must be garnered through public participation in the process and the public's need to see that the security policy clearly reflects national interests and can be realistically implemented without unreasonable commitments of resources. In their Phase III Report, while stopping short of recommending open public consultation on the development of security policy, the commission recommends greater openness and accountability on the part of the National Security Advisor who must be more than a Presidential appointee and be *“accountable to the American people through Senate confirmation and through formal and public appearances before Congressional committees.”⁷⁹* When addressing the challenge of consultation, the commission recommends the establishment of a *“blue ribbon committee”⁸⁰* tasked to identify potential threats to American security in the 21st century and develop a range of policy options and alternatives that can be applied to protect American interests. Of import here is the recognition that the national security strategy

⁷⁷ *ibid* p. 5.

⁷⁸ *ibid* pp. 6-7. The Commission identified the following precepts as a guide to formulating national security strategy:

- (1) Strategy and policy must be grounded in the national interest.
- (2) The maintenance of America's strength is a long-term commitment and cannot be assured without conscious, dedicated effort.
- (3) The United States faces unprecedented opportunities as well as dangers in the new era.
- (4) The United States must find new ways to join with other capable and like-minded nations.
- (5) The nation must set priorities and apply them consistently.
- (6) America must never forget that it stands for certain principles, most importantly freedom under the rule of law.

⁷⁹ United States. US Commission on National Security in the 21st Century: Hart-Rudman Commission Roadmap for National Security: Imperative for Change. Washington, 15 February 2001. p. 51.

⁸⁰ *ibid* pp. 131-134p

must include recommending concomitant changes to the national security apparatus and must include “*individuals who have national recognition and significant depth of experience and public service*” including “*accomplished and prominent United States citizens and reflecting a cross-section of American public and private sector life.*”

In an addendum to its report,⁸¹ the committee recommends a hearing process that will highlight important strategic issues and focus public attention on threats, risks and options. Thus, if adopted, the US approach will be orchestrated consultation with government-selected members of the public who will then present their findings and recommendations in public and not broad-based consultation with individual members of the public or unsponsored NGOs.

The Australian Government undertook a defence review in 2000. Significant in this review was the extensive degree of public consultation undertaken by the *Community Consultation Team (CCT)*. Initiated by the government with full support of the Opposition Party, the *Community Consultation Process (CCP)* undertook an open, consultative approach to defence policy development. In its report⁸² to the government, the team identified a number of defence issues that were important to Australians.⁸³ What makes the Australian experience so significant is the manner in which consultation was undertaken. Community consultation took place over a nine-week period from 6 July to 7 September 2000. The CCT sought to consult with as many citizens as possible so employed all media at their disposal to reach every corner of Australia. This included a professionally managed Internet website, full media coverage of meetings and press conferences as well as periodic media updates. In all, 28 public townhall meetings were

⁸¹ United States. US Commission on National Security in the 21st Century: Hart-Rudman Commission Roadmap for National Security: Imperative for Change Addendum on Structure and Process Analyses, Vol 1. Washington, 15 April 2001. p. 32.

⁸² Australia. Australian Perspectives on Defence: Report of the Community Consultation Team. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, September 2000 pp. 6-28.

⁸³ The CCT identified seven major areas of concern that were included in both the final report on consultation and the Defence White Paper: community attitudes to defence; strategic fundamentals important to Australians; force structures and capabilities desired by Australians; personnel issues; the

conducted, attended by more than 2,000 citizens.⁸⁴ Over eighty percent of the 1,100 written submissions received were from individuals, the remainder being from special interest groups and NGOs.

At the outset, to provide Australians with a foundation upon which to comment and formulate their opinions, the government released a Defence Public Discussion Paper (PDP) that included major defence and security issues and some of the choices that could be made with regards to defence policy. The PDP was not a statement of policy, but rather a starting point for debate that examined key defence issues, setting out some of the options for the future Defence Force and outlining the policy issues that would guide the government's decision. This 93 page document,⁸⁵ supported by a video overview of the challenges facing Australia's security, addresses all of the traditional aspects of a White Paper but stops short of stating policy. That is to say, the discussion paper provides a strategic assessment in layman's terms; it identifies budget pressures and the trade-offs necessary both within defence and within the public budget; and it identifies the challenges faced in structuring and equipping a military force for the present and the future. Throughout the discussion paper, the notion of "choice" was very clear. More importantly, the impact of the choices is well explained for the taxpayer who might have to pay for certain choices or face the consequence of having made other choices. Nearly eighteen thousand copies of the PDP were distributed in hard copy. A further six thousand were downloaded from the website by interested individuals. In addition to the 1,100 written submissions presented to the team, more than five thousand emails and nearly four thousand telephone calls were received by the secretariat supporting the team. By the end of the nine-week consultation period, there had been nearly 180,000 website "hits", resulting in 106,000 detailed site "visits". According to the report of the CCT:

importance of a credible reserve force; the importance of military cooperation with industry and the recognition that budgets would have to be adjusted to afford the policy that Australians wanted.

⁸⁴ Australia. Australian Perspectives on Defence: Report of the Community Consultation Team. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, September 2000 p. 5.

⁸⁵ Australia. Defence Review 2000 – Our Future Defence Force: A Public Discussion Paper. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, June 2000 p. 5.

“The vast majority of those who participated in the meetings or submitted their views were positive about the process and are keen to build on the initiative. The predominant view was that the process was a positive step in policy development.”⁸⁶

By not limiting itself to academic specialists, media commentators, interest groups and NGOs, the consultation bore the results of broader, wide ranging ideas that may not otherwise have been heard. In parallel with the CCP, the government initiated a consultation process within the Department of Defence, giving Defence personnel an opportunity to express their views. In a two stage process, Service Chiefs and Group Managers briefed personnel and sought their views, and reported these back to the Chief of the Defence Force and the Secretary of the Department of Defence. In all, the process was open and transparent and not only gave the Australian public an opportunity to comment, but also the members of the Defence Forces and employees of the Defence Department. To reinforce the transparency of the process and the linkages to the resulting White Paper, key quotes from the consultation report and from citizen’s input were included within the final White Paper.

Some Proposals for Future Canadian Reviews

Canadians today are overall better educated and better informed than their predecessors. They understand the concept of choice when it comes to making the necessary trade-offs within the domain of public policies and programs. They are prepared to express their opinions in response to being informed. This willingness to participate in a policy review is reinforced by the experience of the 1994 defence policy review. The technology to support broader consultation is available today. Building on the interest shown in the 1994 review, and the experiences of Australia in the 2000 review, the Canadian Government is well positioned to consult openly with Canadians to develop not only new defence and foreign policies but more importantly an overarching security policy that encompasses all of the determinants of national security. Having said

⁸⁶ Australia. Australian Perspectives on Defence: Report of the Community Consultation Team. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, September 2000 pp. 5.

that Canadians may be ready to participate in open consultation, it must be clear that this does not absolve the government of its role in the development of policy. In a representative democracy such as that enjoyed by Canadians, policy development is the purview of government, and hence politicians. Whenever public budgets are involved, politicians need to be seen as being “front and centre” to protect the interests of all Canadians. The fact that Canadians appear to be more interested in consultation in matters such as defence and security may be as much a result of frustration with the current political landscape of the country, with a single, dominant Federal Party, as it is with the timeliness of the subject itself. Thus, the type of consultation undertaken would have to ensure that the subject of defence and security was the target of consultation and this was not merely seen as a method of the public expressing dissatisfaction with the government or political processes. Otherwise, it could be seen to weaken the very foundation of the government that it was to reinforce.

It is now clear from statements by both the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs that reviews of the policies governing their departments are necessary. They have both also indicated that they believe that their respective departmental policies must be more closely linked. If, in doing this review, the government elects to consult with Canadians, there are three important factors that must be considered by the government before embarking on public consultation – about what, how and with whom should it consult? It is not enough to merely say “security policy.” Dewitt and Leyton-Brown offered their seven determinants of security policy for Canadians.⁸⁷ While all are applicable to the development of security policy, some are more relevant than others to the public consultation process. Opinions vary considerably on the future security environment. Few organizations, let alone individuals, have strategic security analysts that can predict the future with even the vaguest degree of certainty. With that in mind, consultation should focus on Canadians’ view of how they want their armed forces used to contribute to security at home and abroad and how they

⁸⁷ Dewitt, David B and Leyton-Brown, David, eds. Canada’s International Security Policy. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1995. p.18.

see the military contributing to other national initiatives such as foreign assistance and delivering aid.

In deciding why to consult, the government must confirm that the objective is not merely cosmetic in nature as described by Stairs.⁸⁸ If the consultation is to provide meaningful input into the policy development process, a combination of methods would be the most successful. The government must however, avoid using methods that directly target groups or individuals, enabling one to make gains at the direct expense of another creating winners and losers. Thus, the trial balloon or Green Paper approach is most favoured. Recognizing that the government does not want to be caught in the position of wanting to consult, all the while attempting to convince constituents of a pre-ordained policy, it would be wise to commence with a framework policy that expresses key ideas and concepts and then, once that is accepted or amended, the detail can be worked out in stages, garnering support of both the process and the results as the policy is developed. This “Green Paper” approach is very similar to that which proved successful in Australia and could be a great help in the Canadian context. Green Papers and discussion papers have proven useful in the past. In advance of the planned 1985 Defence Review, then MND Robert Coates had intended distributing a Green Paper for discussion with NGOs and academia.⁸⁹ Unfortunately, his abrupt loss the Defence portfolio pre-empted the planned review. The previously mentioned reports of the Canada 21 Council, Project Ploughshares and Group of 13 served as discussion papers of sorts. While they were not commissioned by the SJC(Defence), they did serve to inform and educate interested members of the public and members of the SJC. The SJC(Foreign) commissioned several reports, tailored for its specific purposes. One, “Contemporary Security Issues” by Denis Stairs, was included as an appendix to the SJC(Foreign) final report: Canada’s Foreign Policy: Principles and Priorities for the

⁸⁸ Stairs, Denis. The Future of Canadian Security and Defence Policy: NGO’s Public Consultations and the Security Policy Process. Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University. pp. 1-4.

⁸⁹ Jockel, Joseph and Sokolsky, Joel. Canada and Collective Security: Odd Man Out. The Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, Washington: Praeger, 1986. p.13.

Future.⁹⁰ The development of Green Papers or discussion papers is an important first step in the public consultation process. It is in this capacity that academia should first be engaged. As demonstrated in both of the 1994 reviews, there is a wealth of knowledge and independent thought available in the academic community. It is this resource that should be exploited by the government in developing discussion papers that will form the foundation for consultation. While academics and “think-tank” NGOs potentially offer the most independent input, care must be taken to avoid the process becoming overtaken by organizations that can afford to market their own agenda, such as industrial lobbyists or pro-defence groups, and thus subvert the process.

Finally, if the proposal for iterative consultation is accepted, it remains to be determined with whom the government should consult – who is the public? The American model for consultation sees selected individuals appearing before an accountable organization, in a public hearing, providing their input to the process. The key here is that the individuals and groups providing input are selected; the public part of the consultative process is the appearance of the witnesses in public, not that they are random representatives of the population. In the Australian example, consultation was of the broadest possible nature. All of the submissions became a matter of public record and were made available throughout the process. It was then up to the CCT to determine which recommendations and input would be used in formulating defence policy. In the Canadian experience, the SJC that made defence policy recommendations in 1994 served as an excellent example of successful consultation. Based on Canada’s experiences in 1994 and the well-publicized Australia 2000 experience, public consultation limited to a government selected group of citizens would be seen as a regressive step in 2002 – the public is all Canadians.

There is therefore a balance to be achieved. On one hand, the government needs to respond to the apparent interest in public consultation. On the other hand, it needs to

⁹⁰ Stairs, Denis. “Contemporary Security Issues.” Included as an appendix to Canada’s Foreign Policy: Principles and Priorities for the Future. Ottawa. November 1994. Ottawa.

ensure that the public has enough information to provide meaningful input to the process and that no segment of the public is alienated by the process. Above all, the government must be seen to be in control of the process while not controlling the outcome.

Politicians make policy and commit public resources to implement it once it has been agreed. Politicians must be seen to play an active role, all the while appealing to their constituents and taking into account all public programs and policies, not just the one at hand. If supported by a public discussion paper (Green Paper) there is a much greater likelihood of public involvement if for no other reason than the media will quickly become engaged in the process. A significant advantage of the Green Paper approach, if conducted in the Australian fashion, is that the paper can be used to both inform and educate, and solicit input. To a large degree, it levels the playing field between the experts and the amateurs and encourages input from a broader constituency. In short, it reaches out and brings the citizens in touch with the government that is truly interested in serving the people. Much like policy itself, the value of consultation will only be recognized in the long-term, once it has “been done right” on successive occasions.

“It is easier for attentive publics to force a re-examination of existing policies than it is for them to control the outcome”⁹¹

Public consultation has been effective in the past and, if done right, will be even more effective in the future. It is the “doing it right” that must be addressed by the government in the months to come.

⁹¹ Stairs, Denis. “Publics and Policy Makers: The Domestic Environment of the Foreign Policy Community,” International Journal, Volume XXVI No 1 Winter 1970-71, Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, pp. 245.

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