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INVESTING IN DEFENCE: JUST WAVING THE FLAG?

By

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ABSTRACT

While a Canadian Grand Strategy has never been clearly articulated as such, this paper argues that Canada can indeed claim success for an implied Grand Strategy that has generally been consistent with the wishes of the electorate. The essay begins with a review of past White Papers on defence and of historical data on government defence expenditures, both in absolute terms and as compared to other government programs and to Allied defence spending. The paper finds that the historical record reveals a defence policy based on a minimally funded alliance strategy and reviews arguments both in favor and against increased defence spending as a component of a Grand Strategy. The paper posits that, from a government perspective, successful policy is measured in terms of its impact on national interests and prosperity, and whether it is in line with the wishes of the electorate. A review of primary indicators of national prosperity shows that Canada is a prosperous nation and that government expenditures have generally been in accordance with public opinion. The paper concludes that the government can claim success for its past Grand Strategy but suggests that the new “Pax Americana” and an emerging public support for increased defence spending has prompted the need to reevaluate the continued viability of this strategy.

INVESTING IN DEFENCE: JUST WAVING THE FLAG?

This marks the seventh straight year that the United Nations has chosen Canada as the best country in the world in which to live ... This international recognition is a tribute not only to the prosperous nation we have built together, but -- above all -- to the way we have built it: the Canadian way.¹

*Prime Minister Jean Chrétien
June 29, 2000*

Undoubtedly, most Canadians will have shared in the elation expressed above by Jean Chrétien at the news that Canada had once again been recognized as the best country in the world by the United Nations. Not only should we celebrate this outcome, suggested the Prime Minister, but also the “way we have built it”. Jean Chrétien, at least in part, was essentially claiming success for the Grand Strategy of the Canadian government.

A Grand Strategy “should provide a clear concept of how economic, diplomatic, and military instruments of national power will be used to achieve national goals and policy.”² While a Canadian Grand Strategy has never been clearly articulated as such, this paper argues that Canada can indeed claim success for an implied Grand Strategy that has generally been consistent with the wishes of the electorate. The essay begins with a review of past White Papers on defence and of historical data on government defence expenditures, both in absolute terms and as compared to other government programs and to Allied defence spending. The paper finds that the historical record reveals a defence policy based on a minimally funded alliance strategy and reviews arguments both in favor and

1. Jean Chrétien. Quoted in a Press Release from the Prime Minister’s Office, *For the 7th Straight Year Canada Receives Top Rating on the Human Development Index*. Canada: Privy Council Office. News Release, 29 June 2000. Former Prime Minister’s Newsroom Archive (1995-2003). <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/> Internet; accessed 9 April 2005.

2. National Defence, “Security Environment”, available from http://www.vcds.forces.gc.ca/dgsp/pubs/rep-pub/dda/cosstrat/2001/sfp/key2_e.asp; Internet; accessed 24 May 2005, n. pag.

against increased defence spending as a component of a Grand Strategy. The paper posits that, from a government perspective, successful policy is measured in terms of its impact on national interests and prosperity, and whether it is in line with the wishes of the electorate. A review of primary indicators of national prosperity shows that Canada is a prosperous nation and that government expenditures have generally been in accordance with public opinion.

The paper concludes that the government can claim success for its past Grand Strategy but suggests that the new “Pax Americana” and an emerging public support for increased defence spending has prompted the need to reevaluate the continued viability of this strategy.

CANADIAN DEFENCE POLICY

Post-War Roots

and security under the newly created United Nations.⁵ Consequently, Claxton established three fundamental roles for the Canadian Forces:⁶

- (1) to defend Canada against aggression;
- (2) to assist the civil power in maintaining law and order within the country;
- (3) to carry out any undertakings which by our own voluntary act we may assume in co-operation with friendly nations or under any effective plan of collective action under the United Nations.

As Bland points out, “the first two missions were the obvious and irreducible responsibility of government.”⁷ The defence of the homeland is of course the *raison d’être* of any national armed force and the maintenance of law and order a primary responsibility of any government. The third role was an acknowledgement of the fact that Canada might choose to get involved in international military coalitions under the United Nations umbrella. To a great extent, this willingness to engage internationally was more driven by Canada’s need to finally break away from British imperialism and assert a newly found national identity, than by a strategic assessment of Canada’s security requirements.⁸

The spirit of internationalism continued to prevail and guide Canada’s foreign policy in the years following the war as the world’s democracies began to react to the emergence of a new world order. Soon, Canada’s membership in the United Nations was followed with a membership in NATO in 1949, and later with the 1958 NORAD agreement with the United States for the air defence of North America.⁹

5. *Ibid.*, 2.

6. National Defence, *Canada’s Defence...*, 20.

7. Bland, *Canada’s National Defence...*, 3.

8. Bland, *Canada’s National Defence...*, 4.

9. R.J. Sutherland, *Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Defence Policy* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1963), 17.

In 1963, Sutherland was asked by the MND to “review the entire field of Canadian defence policy and to examine all major alternatives.”¹⁰ His report to the MND provided a very cogent analysis of Canada’s foreign and defence policy, and offered recommendations for future options in defence. Sutherland argued that Canada’s policy of participating in alliances was a natural derivative of a foreign policy that was based on internationalism. In his view, the alternative, a foreign policy of isolationism, was not in Canada’s national interest.¹¹

Sutherland went on to observe that, in the absence of a direct threat to Canada, the “adequacy” of Canadian defence policy cannot be measured against a “military yardstick”, and that with only “minor exceptions, the purpose of Canadian defence programs and activities is to support an alliance policy ... to maintain influence with our allies.” He added that “there is also, of course, the more general aim of fostering a sense of national consciousness, purpose and pride.”¹²

The following sections will verify whether Sutherland’s thesis regarding the need to nurture an alliance policy has withstood the test of time. While there have been other expressions of defence policy over the years, the historical review will only include periodic “snapshots” in time and review the White Papers on defence.¹³

10. Ibid., Foreword.

11. Ibid., 24.

12. Sutherland, *Report...*, 3.

13. Defence policy is also articulated in speeches from the throne, speeches from the Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence, and Defence Policy Statements such as the one recently issued by the government in April 2005

White Paper on Defence (1964)

According to Maloney, Sutherland's report "formed the strategic basis of the ground-breaking 1964 White Paper on Defence."¹⁴ While the MND, Paul Hellyer, downplayed Sutherland's contribution as only "routine" and "bland" in nature, a review of the 1964 White Paper confirms Maloney's assertion and reveals the continuation of a defence policy largely based on the support of alliance commitments and therefore consistent with Sutherland's views.¹⁵

Hellyer, appointed to the post of MND by Prime Minister Lester Pearson, was instructed to address two specific issues. First, in the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis, there was a concern that the actions of the Canadian Forces had not been controlled by the government of Canada but rather by allied commanders. Hellyer was to effect any and all necessary change to ensure positive control of Canada's military. Second, there was an expressed wish to rapidly reduce defence spending.¹⁶

Hellyer set aside existing studies of military requirements and began a complete review of both defence policy and administration. While he did not reject the concept of a defence policy based on alliances, he was seeking a Canadian strategic rationale for the participation in these alliances. In his view, the tri-service organizational structure of the Canadian Forces inhibited the development of an integrated Canadian defence policy.¹⁷

14. Sean M. Maloney, "Canadian National Security at the Crossroads: Selected Documents on the Defence Policy Debate 1963-1968," (Lecture Notes, Queen's University, 1999), v.

15. Paul Hellyer, *Damn the Torpedoes* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1990), 34.

16. Bland, *Canada's National Defence...*, 58.

17. *Ibid.*, 59.

Furthermore, Hellyer envisaged a force structure that would be prepared for “a wide range of possible deployment, from NATO back-up to world-wide peacekeeping operations.”¹⁸

As he began to personally write the White Paper, the need for integration was foremost in his mind: “The lack of coordination at the top, and the seemingly haphazard determination of priorities, exercised a profound influence on me as I began to think about the shape of things to come.”¹⁹ Thus, the 1964 White Paper directed the integration of the Canadian Forces and established the objective of “a single unified defence force for Canada.”²⁰

Interestingly, in listing Canadian defence objectives, Hellyer chose to place international commitments ahead of domestic requirements, and drew a linkage between foreign and defence policy:

“ The objectives of Canadian defence policy, which cannot be dissociated from foreign policy, are to preserve the peace by supporting collective defence measures to deter military aggression; to support Canadian foreign policy including that arising out of our participation in international organizations, and to provide for the protection and surveillance of our territory, our air-space and our coastal waters.”²¹

Notwithstanding the Prime Minister’s desire to reduce defence expenditures, the White Paper affirmed Canada’s obligations to making a contribution to the deterrence of war by contributing conventional forces in support of NATO’s strategy of “flexible

18. Hellyer, *Damn the Torpedoes...*, 43.

19. *Ibid.*, 34.

20. National Defence, *White Paper on Defence* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1964), 19.

21. 1964 *White Paper on Defence...*, 5.

response”. The bulk of these forces were to be located in Canada where they would be available for deployment in United Nations peacekeeping missions.²²

Defence in the 70s

While Hellyer respected ongoing commitments to military alliances, MND Macdonald and the Trudeau government sought to “change, redirect, or eliminate those commitments entirely.”²³ According to Keeble, “Trudeau questioned the traditional premises of Pearsonian internationalism, particularly the importance of NATO.”²⁴ Trudeau was very concerned about the dominance of NATO in shaping Canada’s foreign policy to the extent that he believed that, rather than having foreign policy determine defence policy, Canada’s foreign policy was effectively being dictated by this military alliance.²⁵

The desire to move away from a NATO focus provides the context for the five major themes found in the 1971 White Paper on Defence. First, the policy moved away from a military strategy of “flexible response” and embraced a strategy of deterrence based on “mutually assured destruction”. Second, a view was held that a reborn and prosperous Europe did not require Canadian Forces personnel to be stationed overseas for its defence. Third, it was considered that, in view of a growing non-military threat to economic resources (i.e., in the Arctic and fisheries), the Canadian Forces had an important and

22. Ibid., 12.

23. Bland, *Canada's National Defence...*, 111.

24. Edna Keeble, “Rethinking the 1971 White Paper and Trudeau’s impact on Canadian defense policy,” *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 27, no. 4 (Winter 1997) [journal online]; available from <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=390781001&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=POD&RQT=309&VName=POD&TS=1117296774&clientId=1711> ; Internet; accessed 26 May 2005.

25. J.L. Granatstein, *Who Killed the Canadian Military?* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd, 2004), 116.

growing role in safeguarding national sovereignty. Fourth, it was believed that Canada could no longer play a significant role in peacekeeping and should therefore reduce its participation in United Nations operations. Finally, there was a need to redefine the relationship between the Minister, the Chief of Defence Staff, and the Deputy Minister to establish a new decision-making structure in National Defence.²⁶

The 1971 White Paper highlighted the need to move away from a specialization of roles to “more versatile forces and multi-purpose equipment.”²⁷ With this orientation in mind, the paper provided an examination and prioritization of four major areas of activity for the Canadian Forces:

- (a) surveillance of our own territory and coast-lines;
- (b) defence of North America in co-operation with U.S. forces;
- (c) NATO commitments as may be agreed upon; and
- (d) international peacekeeping roles as we may from time to time assume.²⁸

Thus, the White Paper set the stage for a significant reduction in defence spending and a sharp drop in the number of personnel stationed in Europe. In the end, the policy of concentrating military resources for the safeguarding of national sovereignty would prove to be ill advised and unjustified. European allies demanded that Canada reengage which led to the creation of new commitments to replace old ones. By 1979, Canada’s defence policy had once again espoused an alliance strategy which unfortunately could no longer be supported by a depleted military.²⁹ Under Trudeau’s reign, “the military teeth that gave

26. Bland, *Canada’s National Defence...*, 113-115.

27. National Defence, *Defence in the 70s*. (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971), 16.

28. *Ibid.*, 16.

29. Bland, *Canada’s National Defence...*, 112.

some bite to Canada's place in the world rapidly began to decay" and "by the time he left office, no one paid much attention to his toothless Canada."³⁰

Challenge and Commitment: A Defence Policy for Canada

By the early 1980s, the liberal government had managed to alienate both Canadian "doves" and "hawks". On the one hand, analysts pointed to a "commitment-capability" gap that made it impossible for the Canadian Forces to meet its alliance commitments. According to Sokolsky, "Canada's position as the second lowest contributor to NATO ... was drawing increased attention at home and abroad."³¹ On the other hand, pacifists who grew weary of the cold war were arguing for an independent foreign policy and a clean break from the NATO alliance. Thus, defence policy was a hotly debated issue in the 1984 federal election and an important priority of the newly elected conservative government of Prime Minister Mulroney.³²

According to Nossal, "under Mulroney, Canada was an active multilateralist, joining the Organization of American States, opposing American unilateralism, and arguing for multilateral solutions to such conflicts as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait."³³ The early years of the Mulroney government were marred by the dismissal of the first MND, Robert Coates, for questionable conduct.³⁴ This event, as well as internal policy squabbles

30. Granatstein, *Who Killed...*, 124.

31. Joel J. Sokolsky, "Trends in United States strategy and the 1987 white paper on defence," *International Journal* 42, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 683.

32. Bland, *Canada's National Defence...*, 184.

33. Kim Richard Nossal, "The Mulroney Years: Transformation and Tumult," *Policy Options*, (June-July 2003): 81.

34. Robert Coates resigned in 1985 amidst media reports that, while on DND business in West Germany, he visited a nightclub featuring nude dancers, and he or members of his group left behind a briefcase containing

and the rapidly changing world order, resulted in a lack of progress in formulating a new defence policy until a young and determined Perrin Beatty was appointed to the post of MND in 1986. He immediately set to work to produce a new White Paper.³⁵

The 1987 White Paper, *Challenge and Commitment: A Defence Policy for Canada*, sought to bridge the “commitment-capability” gap created during the Trudeau years and was based on a strategic assessment that predicted a continually expanding Soviet threat. The white paper listed three major components of Canadian defence policy: “defence and collective security, arms control and disarmament and the peaceful resolution of disputes.”³⁶ It reaffirmed the need for an alliance strategy and the vital importance of the NATO and NORAD alliances, including the forward basing of conventional forces in Europe, for defence and sovereignty missions.³⁷ However, while Canada was to continue participation in NATO, the paper did signify a “shift from an overwhelmingly European orientation toward one that recognizes the growing importance of North American defence.”³⁸ The paper also highlighted the need for arms control and peacekeeping as important elements of an overall security policy aimed at containing and preventing the escalation of regional conflicts.³⁹

classified material (see DND Maple Leaf article, 12 Feb 85, available from http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/community/MapleLeaf/html_files/html_view_e.asp?page=Vol3_4_back).

35. Bland, *Canada's National Defence...*, 185.

36. National Defence, *Challenge and Commitment: A Defence Policy for Canada*. (Ottawa: Canadian Government Publishing Centre, 1987), 3.

37. *Ibid.*, 24.

38. Joel J. Sokolsky, “Trends in United States strategy and the 1987 white paper on defence,” *International Journal* 42, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 705.

39. *Ibid.*, 676.

The White Paper called for significant increases in military hardware including the controversial acquisition of nuclear submarines to provide a Canadian response to the threat of Soviet submarines in the Arctic.⁴⁰ However, the ambitious shopping spree that might have been launched never materialized. The paper effectively collapsed under its own weight when the end of the cold war rendered the essential premise of the rearming exercise invalid. In 1992, MND Marcel Masse declared that “many of the assumptions which underpinned our security policy over forty years are no longer valid.”⁴¹

1994 White Paper on Defence

The Collenette White Paper “was a bold attempt by the minister of defence to rescue defence policy from the dictates of the Cold War and officers and officials conditioned by that singular event.”⁴² The paper succinctly introduced its intentions with the opening sentence of the first chapter: “The Cold War is over.”⁴³

The White Paper affirmed that the “maintenance of multi-purpose, combat-capable forces is in the national interest” because only such a capability would provide the “flexibility and freedom of action” desired by the Government in the promotion and protection of Canadian values and interests.⁴⁴ However, as Bland points out, the paper quickly added that “the challenge (would) be to design a defence program that will deliver capable armed forces within the limits of our resources.”⁴⁵

40. Ibid., 696.

41. Department of National Defence, *Canadian Defence Policy*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1992), 1.

42. Bland, *Canada's National Defence...*, 285.

43. National Defence, *1994 Defence White Paper*, (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 1994), 3.

44. *1994 Defence White Paper...*, 13.

45. Bland, *Canada's National Defence...*, 283.

The White Paper acknowledged a continuing requirement for the participation in alliances and a Canadian “vital interest in doing its part to ensure global security” to promote international trade.⁴⁶ It underscored the need to maintain a capability to effectively participate in NORAD, NATO, and United Nations operations or risk losing “a significant degree of respect and influence abroad.”⁴⁷ However, the paper foresaw a substantial reduction of NATO’s importance to Canada: “In 1994 Canada hoped to build NATO-UN military co-operation and believed its military future would unfold largely in the context of UN-style peacekeeping deployments.”⁴⁸

Thus, the 1994 White Paper promoted the active participation in multilateral alliances and the promotion of collective security as a reflection of Canadian values and interests.⁴⁹ According to Bland, while a prioritized listing of defence objectives is not included, the paper implicitly places the United Nations mission of “collective security” ahead of the NATO imperative of “collective defence”. The language and organization of the paper shows that “the emphasis was towards the UN and its needs and away from the expensive, open-ended commitments that characterized Canadian defence policy between 1959 and 1992.”⁵⁰ Sokolsky agreed with Bland and provided the following endorsement:

The 1994 Canadian White Paper on defense gets it right this time. But this is not so much because it offers an impeccably reasoned and clairvoyant national security strategy. But, rather because it is largely consistent with

46. *1994 Defence White Paper...*, 3.

47. *Ibid.*, 12.

48. David Bercuson, “What it takes to be a good NATO partner,” *National Post* (24 August 2001) [newspaper article online]; available from <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=9&did=245479061&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1117311857&clientId=1711>; Internet; accessed 26 May 2005.

49. *1994 Defence White Paper...*, 12.

50. Bland, *Canada’s National Defence...*, 284.

overall foreign policy objectives, what the public purse is capable of paying for and what the Canadian people are likely to support.⁵¹

The Way Ahead

More than ten years after the publication of the last White Paper on defence, the Canadian Forces anxiously awaits the imminent issue of a new Canadian defence policy. It is expected that the issuance of the defence policy will closely follow the release of a new Canadian international policy which was promised in the October 2004 Throne Speech.⁵² Should this come to pass, the new international and defence policies would be published one year after the release of the first Canadian National Security Policy in April 2004. While our history has “illustrated that Canada can perhaps survive with an incoherent defence policy or even no policy at all”,⁵³ Canada will be able to claim to have evolved from a defence policy vacuum to a “policy-rich” environment. Many of the essential ingredients of an articulated Grand Strategy will finally be in place.⁵⁴

If the last ten years of CF operations are any indication of the future, then the spirit of the 1994 Paper and its emphasis on collective security is likely to continue in years to come. Strategic Assessment 2004 confirms the rationality of a defence policy based on a continuing shift away from traditional NATO and European security missions to an

51. Joel J. Sokolsky, “Getting it right this time: The 1994 Defence White Paper,” [online]; available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/research_pubs/canada.pdf; Internet; accessed 28 May 2005, 30.

52. The Government of Canada finally released its International Policy Statement (IPS) on 19 Apr 05 after this paper was written. Notwithstanding, a cursory review of the IPS by the author has confirmed that the document does not alter the main thesis and conclusions reached in this paper. The IPS is available on the Internet at the following address <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cip-pic/ips/ips-home-en.asp> (Accessed 27 May 05).

53. Bland, *Canada's National Defence...*, 117.

54. As previously outlined in this paper, a Grand Strategy should provide a clear concept of how economic, diplomatic, and military instruments of national power will be used to achieve national goals and policy. In that it articulates a Canadian strategy for the synchronization of defence, development, diplomacy, and trade efforts on the world scene, the IPS provides a significant portion of the main elements of a Grand Strategy.

emphasis on the promotion of international security through participation in United Nations operations and perhaps NATO out-of-area operations.⁵⁵

Notwithstanding a temporary break in resolve in the 1970s, the record shows that Canada's defence policy has consistently supported the alliance strategy espoused by Sutherland. In Bland's view, the fundamental elements of Canadian defence policy can be traced even earlier, as many of the salient features of Claxton's policy survive to this day including the participation in alliances as a means to further a foreign policy of internationalism.⁵⁶

HISTORICAL SPENDING ON DEFENCE

If actions speak louder than words, then the true manifestation of government thinking is perhaps better found in budgetary expenditures than in policy documents. As Sutherland remarked over forty years ago, "the budget is the primary instrument for the management of defence programs ... if necessary, words can be eaten but hardware is indigestible."⁵⁷ Treddenick goes further when he asserts that "the defence budget is defence policy."⁵⁸

Figure 1 shows average defence spending for the past 37 years at about \$13.2B (in 2003 constant year dollars), ranging from a low of approximately \$10.8B during the Trudeau years to a high of \$16.5B during the Mulroney tenure. However, Figure 2 shows that, when expressed as a percentage of GDP, spending on defence has remained relatively

55. Canada, National Defence. Strategic Assessment 2004. n. pag.

56. Bland, *Canada's National Defence...*, 5.

57. Sutherland, *Report...*, 30.

58. John M. Treddenick, "The Defence Budget," in *Canada's International Security Policy*, ed. David B. Dewitt and David Leyton-Brown, 413-454 (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1995), 413.

constant over the past 30 years while health & social services have shown a slightly increasing trend.

Figure 3 shows that the cost per capita of health & social services has doubled in the last 30 years, supporting the now common refrain of politicians and analysts in the media citing the rising cost of health care. However, it is interesting to note that, whether expressed as a percentage of GDP or as a per capita expenditure, defence spending in Canada has remained constant. Also noteworthy are the trends in shares of expenditures as illustrated in Figure 4. When taken over the past forty years, the share of government expenditures allocated to programs averaged at about 80%, with the balance of expenditures in any given year going to service the national debt. Public debt charges represented 12.2 % of expenditures in 1964, and had risen to a high of 25.9% in 1994 and had dropped to 20.2% in 2003. The exact opposite trend is seen in the National Defence share of the purse, with 20.3% of expenditures in 1964, and only 7% in 2003. This does not necessarily imply that debt reduction has been funded through reduction in defence spending. However, in a more general sense, an increase in debt load reduces the governments discretionary spending and therefore impacts defence spending.⁵⁹

A discussion of Canadian defence expenditures invariably leads to a comparison of national defence spending with that of our NATO allies. Near the end of the Cold War, David Lightburn, of NATO's Defence Planning and Policy Division, observed that "since the founding of the NATO Alliance ... the equitable sharing of the Alliance's roles, risks and responsibilities has, in one form or another, been a perennial challenge". He cites two

59. "Making Sense out of Dollars" (2003-2004) shows total discretionary spending at 40.1% and defence spending accounting for 6.8% of total government expenditures.

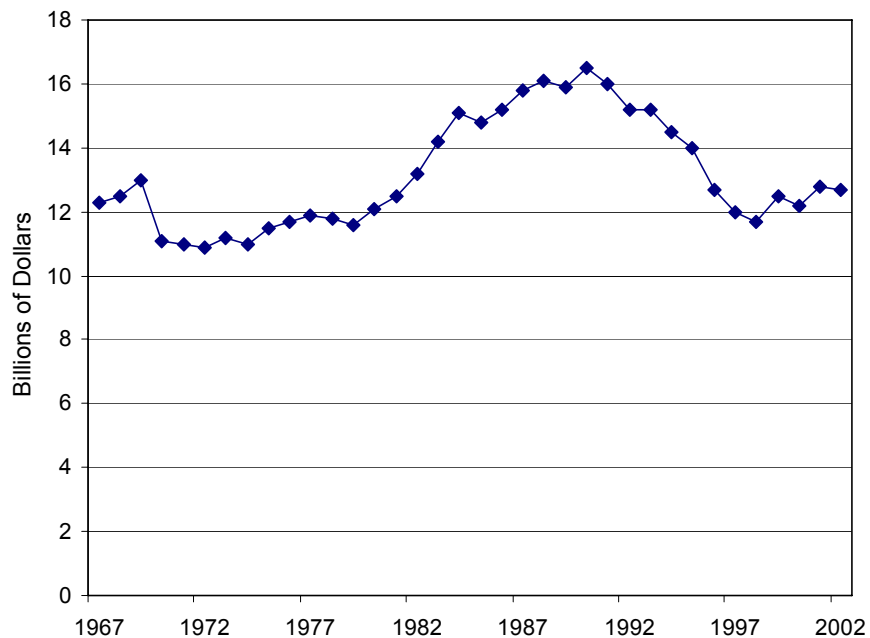


Figure 1- Defence Expenditures Historical Trend (2003 CYD)

Source: Canada, National Defence, Making Sense out of Dollars (Ottawa: 2003-2004), 40.

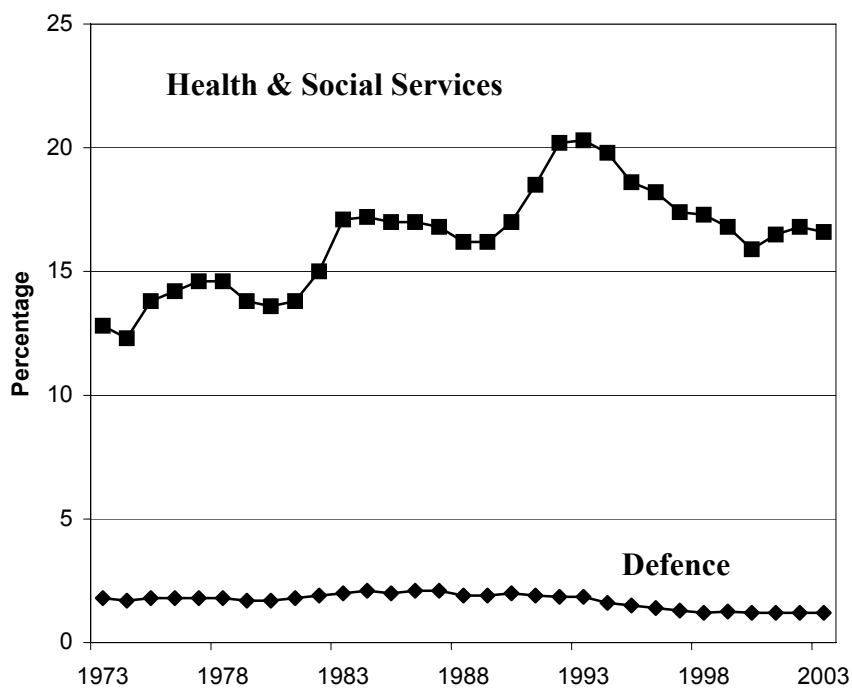


Figure 2– Expenditures as a Percentage of GDP

Source: Canada, National Defence, Making Sense out of Dollars (Ottawa: 2003-2004), 30

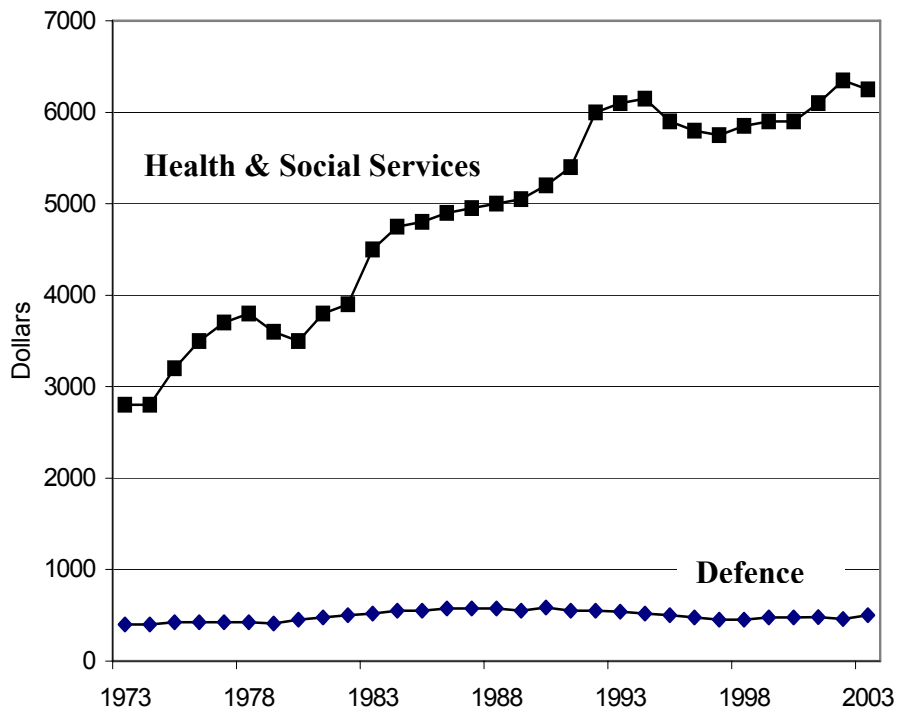


Figure 3– Government Expenditures per Capita

Source: Canada, National Defence, Making Sense out of Dollars (Ottawa: 2003-2004), 32

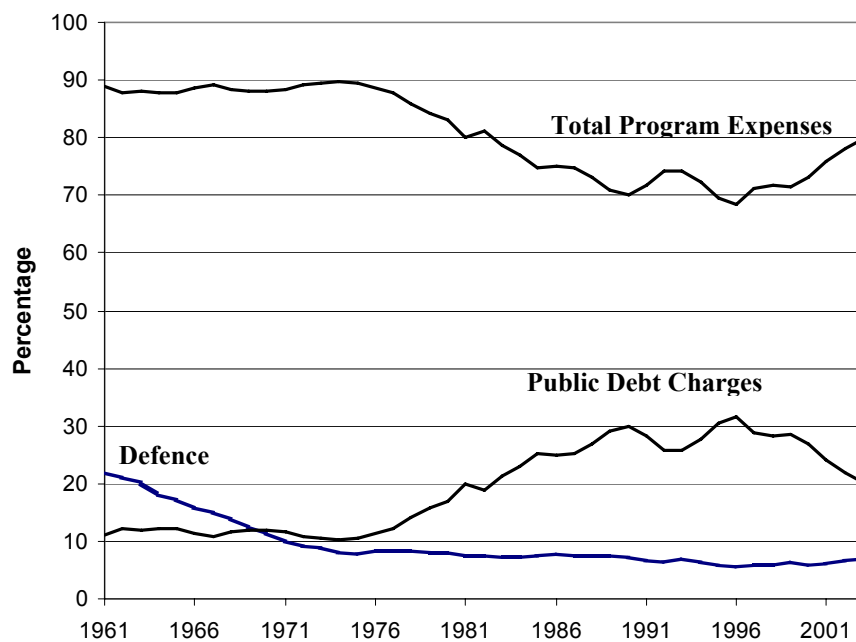


Figure 4– Trend in Share of Federal Government Expenditures

Source: Canada, Finance. Fiscal Reference Tables (Oct 04), Table 9

NATO studies that addressed the issue of “burdensharing” and revealed the complexity of the problem. The studies recognized that “there were many factors to be considered in assessing the contributions of a particular country” and that both the input and output sides of the burdensharing equation must be considered. Three key input indicators were deemed to be of particular significance. First, the percentage of GDP spent on defence as it “broadly depicts a country’s contribution in relation to its ability to contribute”. Second, “the annual growth in defence spending reflects commitment and general adherence to Alliance Ministerial Guidance”. Third, “the percentage of a population involved in the defence effort indicates a level of commitment to security objectives.”⁶⁰

In the NATO studies, the output side of the NATO burdensharing equation included both quantifiable and non-quantifiable factors. Quantifiable indicators, to name but a few, included: “the size, quality, and sustainability of armed forces; contributions to allied standing forces; assistance to developing defence industry countries (Greece, Portugal and Turkey); variety and breadth of commitment ...”. Less tangible, non-quantifiable factors included, among others: “the economic and social costs associated with the hosting of foreign troops; the environmental impact of low flying; the difficulties and costs of geography in some national defence efforts ...”. Lightburn observed on the thoroughness of the studies and concluded that “the broad treatment has served to demonstrate not only the complexity of the matter but also that many factors contribute to maintaining an effective defence and deterrence and to enhancing Western security and global security.”⁶¹

60. David Lightburn, “The burdensharing debate: Two reports lead the way to progress”, *NATO Review* 38, no.1 (February 1990) [journal online]; available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/review> ; Internet; accessed 30 March 2005.

61. Lightburn, *The burdensharing debate...*, n. pag.

Notwithstanding the complexity of the NATO burdensharing equation, the statistic most often quoted by those who would argue for higher military spending is defence expenditure as a percentage of GDP; in 2003, Canada ranked 17 of 18 just ahead of Luxembourg and, with the expansion of NATO, Canada dropped to 22 of 25 in 2004.⁶² Historically, as shown in Figure 5, Canadian expenditure as a percentage of GDP has consistently been below the NATO average. However, in actual dollars spent, Canada ranked 7th overall in 2003, and moved up a notch to place 6th in 2004, behind the US, UK, France, Germany, and Italy.⁶³ Further, as shown in Figure 6, defence expenditure per capita has been comparable to our European allies. Figure 7 shows a long period of budget stability in actual dollars until the mid-seventies, followed by sharp rise to a period of relative instability and sharp cuts in the nineties. As Sutherland remarked years ago:

“... The size of the Canadian defence budget is no longer based on any particularly clear rationale ... The budget has tended to be made from year-to-year on the general basis that expenditures in dollars must be held constant and that it would be inadvisable to appear to reduce commitments. This is a tactic rather than a policy.”⁶⁴

The historical record of the past thirty to forty years shows that government defence spending has gradually decreased as a percentage of GDP, while there has been a corresponding increase in the share of government spending dedicated to Public Debt charges. Government spending on defence as compared to our NATO allies has also been stable, and while relatively low as a percentage of GDP, the data shows a respectable ranking in actual dollars expended.

The relatively low spending on defence and its negative impact on the generation and sustainment of military capability (as will be argued below) suggests that the

62. National Defence, Making Sense out of Dollars (Ottawa 2003/4 & 2004/5), n.pag

63. Ibid., n.pag .

64. Canada, Report of the Ad Hoc Committee 30.

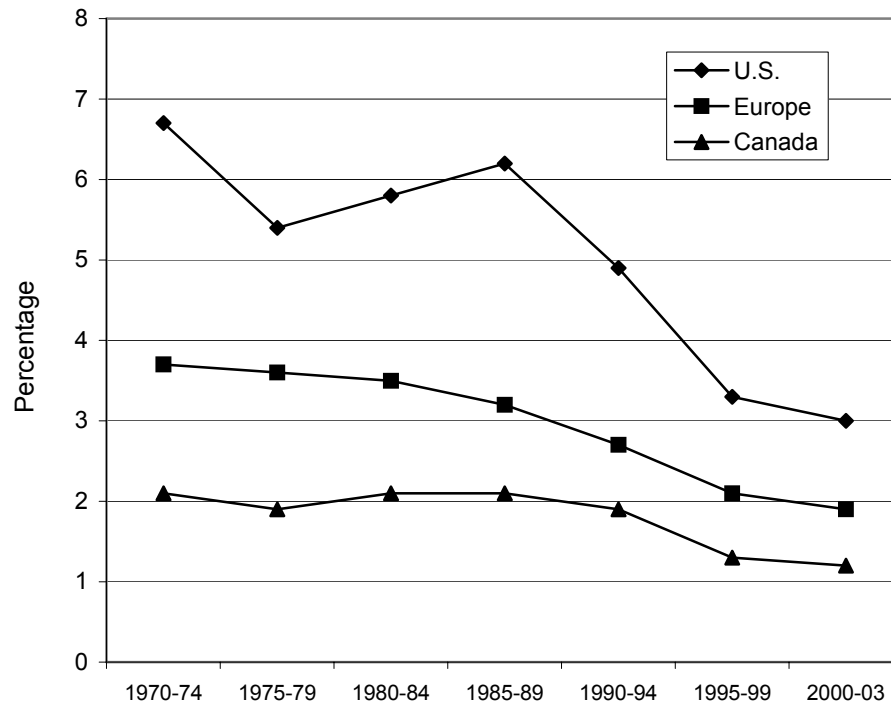


Figure 5– NATO Defence Expenditures as % of GDP

Source: NATO, Defence Expenditures of NATO Countries, n.pag., 29 March 2005
www.nato.int/issues/defence_expenditures/index.html

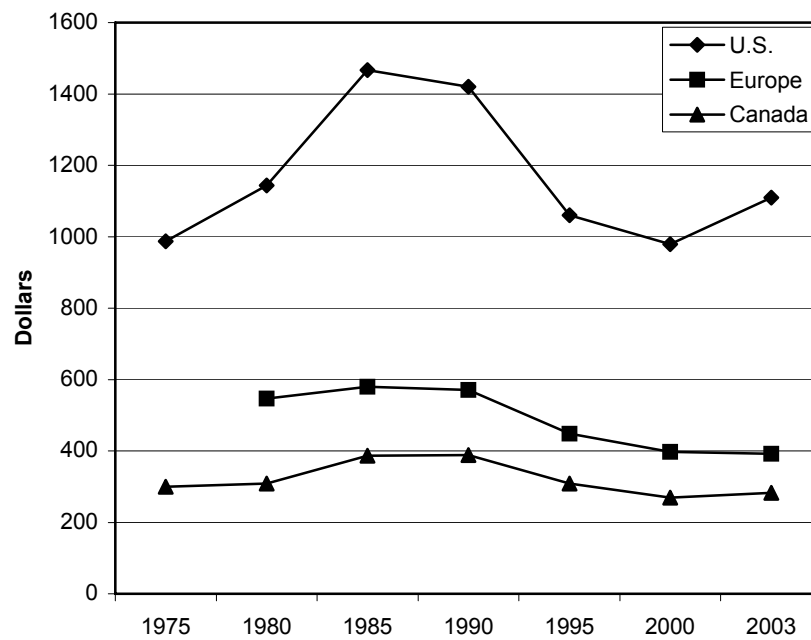


Figure 6– NATO Defence Expenditures per Capita (1995 Dollars)

Source: NATO, Defence Expenditures of NATO Countries, n.pag., 29 March 2005
www.nato.int/issues/defence_expenditures/index.html

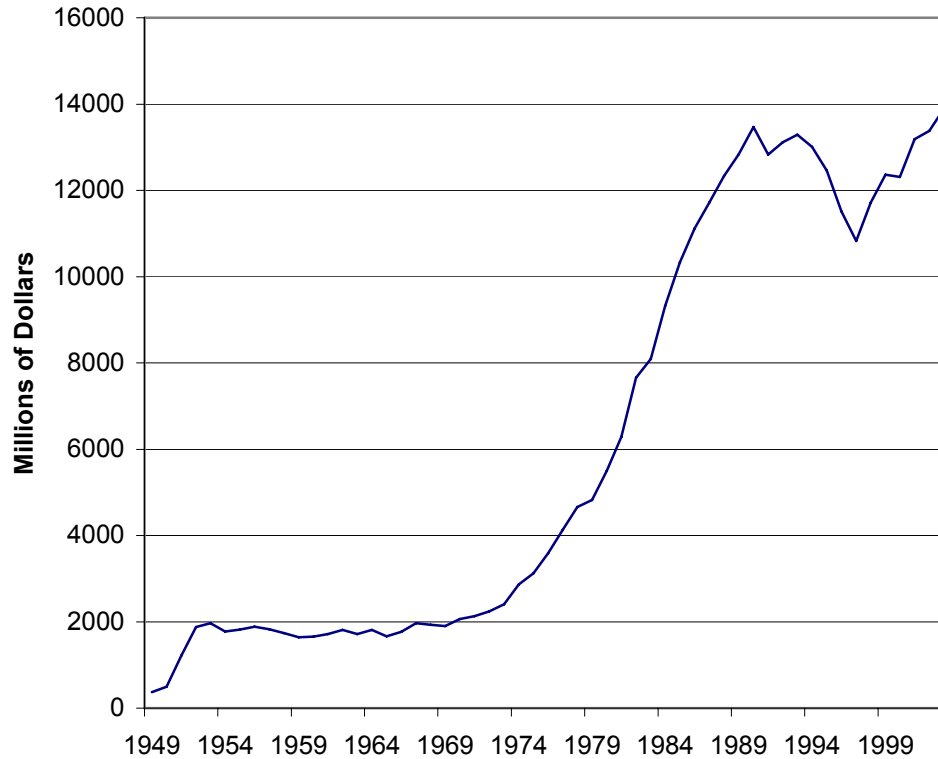


Figure 7– NATO Defence Expenditures (Actual Dollars)

Source: NATO, Defence Expenditures of NATO Countries, n.pag., 29 March 2005
www.nato.int/issues/defence_expenditures/index.html

government’s measure of merit for the appropriateness of defence expenditures has not been based on the operational effectiveness of the CF. In Bland’s view, “prime ministers are not about to become involved in debates about effective and efficient defence.”⁶⁵

Rather, in the absence of a direct threat to the nation, the government’s assessment of the success of its defence policy is based more on the indirect impact of this policy on domestic programs.⁶⁶

65. Douglas Bland, “Everything Military Officers Need to Know About Defence Policy-Making in Canada,” in *Advance or Retreat? Canadian Defence in the 21st Century*, ed. David Rudd, Jim Hanson and Jessica Blitt, 15-29 (Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 2000), 20.

66. Bland, *Everything...*, 20.

Clearly, democratically elected governments are driven to serve the will of the people, both by a sense of moral obligation and by an instinct for self-preservation. Thus, one would expect to find that the Canadian government's focus on domestic programs is supported by Canadian public opinion. It is also reasonable to expect that, in the eyes of the electorate, national prosperity would be a prime indicator of the success of government policy in promoting national interest. Negative indicators in either public opinion or national prosperity cannot be ignored or easily tolerated by the government of the day.

NATIONAL INTERESTS

In October 2004, the Governor General of Canada affirmed in the throne speech, "just as Canada's domestic and international policies must work in concert, so too must our defence, diplomacy, development and trade efforts work in concert."⁶⁷ She went on to state that the government would release "this fall" an international policy statement that would outline this integration.⁶⁸ Having acknowledged the connection between defence, diplomacy, development and trade, the government must now challenge its policy makers to develop an effects-based Grand Strategy that will determine the priority of effort in each of these realms.

From this perspective, many have argued that Canadian government spending on defence is today much lower than it should be, and that this parsimony could lead to very

67. Office of the Prime Minister, "Speech from the Throne to Open the First Session of the Thirty-Eighth Parliament of Canada, October 5, 2004," available from http://pm.gc.ca/grfx/docs/sft_e.pdf; Internet; accessed 1 April 2005.

68. The Government of Canada finally released its International Policy Statement (IPS) on 19 Apr 05 after this paper was written. Notwithstanding, a cursory review of the IPS by the author has confirmed that the document does not alter the main thesis and conclusions reached in this paper. The IPS is available on the Internet at the following address <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cip-pic/ips/ips-home-en.asp> (Accessed 27 May 05).

dire consequences for the military.⁶⁹ Leading the charge is the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence that, in 2002, characterized the under funding of the Department of National Defence as “chronic” and “critical”, and recommended a 25 per cent increase in personnel (from 60,000 to 75,000 personnel), and an increase of \$4 billion to the \$11.2 billion defense budget.⁷⁰ The Senate Committee’s recommendations were based in part on the observations that defence funding at the time was “insufficient to meet the many tasks assigned to our military” and also lacking in terms of providing support to Canadian foreign policy. To make this latter point, the report quotes John Manley who, as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2001, remarked to the *National Post* that: “You can’t just sit at the G-8 table and then, when the bill comes, go to the washroom. If you want to play a role in the world, even as a small member of the G-8, there is a cost to doing that.”⁷¹

What the cost of doing the national business should be, as it were, has been the subject of intense debate in recent years. Many have argued that Canada should spend more on defence or risk the loss of influence on the world stage. In February 2005, Vice Admiral (ret’d) Brodeur’s testimony to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence deplored the lack of leadership shown by the federal government in

69. Bland, Douglas L. *Canada Without Armed Forces?* (Kingston: School of Policy Studies, Queen’s University, 2004). [This source is a collection of articles by various authors that leads to a conclusion, among others, that the CF “will likely disappear” in the 2008-2013 timeframe unless funding for capital acquisition is increased.]

70. Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, “Canadian Security and Military Preparedness,” (February 2002); available from <http://www.parl.gc.ca/37/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/defe-e/rep-e/rep05feb02-e.pdf> ; Internet; accessed 23 March 2005, 127.

71. Standing Senate Committee, *Canadian Security...*, 82-83. Minister Manley was challenged on this statement by the opposition party in Parliament during the Oral Question Period who wondered if this signified a government resolve to increase spending on defence and security. Mr Manley answered that “Canada has punched above its weight in the G-8 and elsewhere. The Prime Minister’s influence, because of his experience and the positions he has taken, has given us greater influence than our size or our population would otherwise indicate.” See http://www.parl.gc.ca/37/1/parlbus/chambus/house/debates/093_2001-10-05/han093_1115-e.htm for complete text of the exchange (Accessed 27 May 05).

formulating and implementing a defence policy that promotes national interests. He argued that NATO European countries have long been dismayed by Canada's low expenditures on defence and that this stinginess has "undoubtedly had a negative impact on Canada's reputation and influence abroad". Additionally, he noted the increased United States emphasis on national security since 9/11 and speculated that the lack of priority on Canadian defence spending as compared to the United States has "undoubtedly convinced many Americans that Canada ... (is) seriously shirking (its) responsibilities in North American defence."⁷²

The majority of Canadian business leaders and CEOs would seem to agree with Vice Admiral Brodeur. In a March 2005 poll, 57 per cent agreed that "low investments in the Canadian military" is a "barrier to good relations" with the United States, compared to 20 per cent who did not. One CEO warned that "maintaining good relations with (the United States) is critically important to Canadian jobs and prosperity ... We snub our noses at them at our peril ..."⁷³ Granatstein agrees with this assessment when he observes that "we cannot offend the United States too often or too grievously or we will pay a serious price ... keeping the Yanks happy, or at least not angry, must be a national interest."⁷⁴ Another CEO deplored the March 2005 decision by the government of Canada not to participate in the United States missile defence program and its resulting impact on Canada-US relations: "The Martin decision to not participate in North American missile

72. N.D, Brodeur, "The Bankrupting of Canada's Military – Causes, Consequences & Remedy," (Submission to the Standing Committee on National Security and Defence, 18 February 2005), n. pag.

73. COMPAS, "Survey for the Financial Post," (7 March 2005); available from www.compass.ca ; Internet; accessed 2 April 2005.

74. J.L. Granatstein, *Who Killed the Canadian Military?* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 2004), 207.

defence is a despicable example of Canada shedding its responsibility. By doing so we risk becoming a U.S. puppet in world affairs.”⁷⁵

Cohen argues that the declining investment in defence has already had a negative impact on the level of influence enjoyed by Canada in the United States. Reminiscing about the Pearson years, he argues that “in its way, in its time, Canada mattered”. Over the past forty years, however, he laments that “Canada has abandoned its military, slashed its foreign aid, and diluted its diplomacy ... Canada has reneged on the costs of international citizenship ... it has lost its right – or, more precisely, its credibility – to criticize.”⁷⁶ In Cohen’s view, the loss of influence with the United States extends to Europe and to the United Nations: “Without real resources (to apply to international affairs) it is harder for Canada to be taken seriously these days in London and Washington, in NATO, and at the UN.”⁷⁷

Some argue that, in the 21st century, the need for ensuring a certain degree of strategic influence for Canada does not necessarily equate to a requirement for increased defence spending. As Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy argued that strategic influence for Canada was better achieved through the exercise of “soft” rather than “hard” power. He defined “soft power” as “the art of disseminating information in such a way that desirable outcomes are achieved through persuasion rather than coercion.”⁷⁸ Axworthy considered that Canada was uniquely suited to excel at the application of soft power

75. COMPAS, “Survey for the Financial Post,” (7 March 2005)..., n. pag.

76. Andrew Cohen, *While Canada Slept: How We Lost Our Place in the World* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2003), 160.

77. Cohen, *While Canada...*, 163.

78. Lloyd Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security: The Need for Leadership”, *International Journal* 52, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 193.

because of the positive international image it has earned over the years. He claimed that Canada “is free of the latent distrust which sometimes undermines the efforts of those countries carrying the baggage of colonialism” and that this trust will “encourage other countries to consider and weigh (Canadian) views.”⁷⁹

Axworthy’s emphasis on “soft power” strikes a harmonious chord with those who argue that Canada is spending too much on defence and should be diverting excessive military dollars to other government programs. The Director of the Polaris Institute Project on the Corporate-Security State, Steven Staples, argues that “Canada’s current defence policy is outdated and mired in Cold War thinking.”⁸⁰ He dismisses the claim that Canada’s military spending as a percentage of GDP is too low as “intentionally misleading” and submits that “actual spending” on defence, which is higher than most other NATO countries, is a more telling statistic.⁸¹ He disagrees that Canada’s international stature will grow with increasing military power. Staples opines that “in recent years Canada’s influence has been derived from precisely the opposite of military power” and that foreign aid budgets rather than the military purse should be enlarged. He believes that public opinion polls support a conclusion that Canadians do not want increased defence spending and “tend to see security deriving from social programs and playing a positive role in the world.”⁸²

Clearly, it is in Canada’s national interest to consider American policy and views when formulating foreign and defence policy. The United States view of Canadian

79. *Ibid.*, 193.

80. Steven Staples, “Breaking Rank: A Citizen’s Review of Canada’s Military Spending,” *Polaris Institute* (2002); available from <http://www.polarisinstitute.org>; Internet; accessed 30 March 2005, 12.

81. Staples, *Breaking Rank...*, 10.

82. *Ibid.*, 38.

defence policy, which differs greatly from Axworthy, has in fact often been expressed publicly by the recent United States Ambassador to Canada, Paul Celluci, during his four-year tenure in that office. In an address at McGill University in February 2005, Ambassador Celluci commented on the close and unique relationship between Canada and the United States, suggesting that “the trend for Canada to increase its defense spending” needs to continue. He pointed to the planned increase of 5,000 regular forces and 3,000 reservists as a “big step in the right direction”. He drew a linkage between defence, diplomacy, development and trade, arguing that Canada can play a “significant role” with the United States in helping countries “with unstable governments and failing economies to make (the) transition to democracy and open markets that can put them on the path toward stability and prosperity and a better life for their people.”⁸³

As noted, the October 2004 Speech from the Throne also acknowledged the linkage between defence, development, diplomacy and trade. The challenge for the government is to determine an investment strategy in each of these areas that maximizes the return on investment for the nation. This paper has reviewed compelling arguments both for and against increased defence spending for Canada. However, the impact of increased military expenditures on the promotion of national interest is difficult to measure or quantify and therefore it may not be possible to directly evaluate the government’s Grand Strategy with respect to defence policy. Rather, in the absence of a direct threat to Canada, and without the clear rationale that such a threat would provide for the articulation and evaluation of a defence policy, the government might be tempted to use the absence of negative consequences to national interests and prosperity as a reasonable indicator of a successful

83. Embassy of the United States, “Remarks by U.S. Ambassador Paul Celluci to ‘Canada in the World’ Conference,” (17 February 2005); available from <http://www.usembassycanada.gov> ; Internet; accessed 10 April 2005.

strategy. Effectively, Prime Minister Chrétien's quote at the beginning of this paper illustrates this penchant. A review of economic benchmarks and other indices presented later in this paper will investigate whether the nation has indeed prospered and answer whether this claim is defensible.

PUBLIC OPINION

A fundamental tenet of a democratically elected government is that it must serve the will of the people. For this reason, and as a matter of political survival, politicians strive to remain in touch with the electorate. Logically then, one primary indicator of a successful Grand Strategy must be the degree to which it enjoys the support of the voting public.

According to Dennis Stairs, "the influence of 'public opinion' on the political and policy-making process is one of the most difficult subjects in political science."⁸⁴ The determination of public opinion is a daunting task in two respects. First, the population consists of many "publics" of various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Second, "opinion" is a complex aggregate of beliefs, values, and attitudes that together form the political culture of a society.⁸⁵

Lee reflects on the significance of values in the formulation of public opinion as it applies to foreign policy. He suggests that ongoing dialogue and research has revealed a set of core values that Canadians believe should guide the development of foreign policy. These values include the respect for the environment, and a commitment to democracy, human rights, fairness, tolerance and diversity. Lee observes that this set of values is very

84. Denis Stairs, "Canadian Attitudes and Public Opinion," (Lecture given to National Securities Studies Course, Canadian Forces College, 14 January 2005), n.pag.

85. Kim Richard Nossal, "Dominant Ideas in Foreign Policy", in *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1997), 138.

much oriented towards quality of life issues. In his view, this is not surprising because research as shown that, for a prosperous nation like Canada, core values will tend to shift from material to non-material priorities.⁸⁶

Nossal argues that “dominant ideas” are at the core of public opinion. He cites Doern and Phidd that suggest that the public’s policy preferences are the product of “dominant ideas ... such as individual liberty, equity, or national identity. While related to ideologies, dominant ideas carry a separate normative force of their own”. He posits that political culture is comprised of a set of political ideologies that provide a structure to public thinking about social, economic, and political issues.⁸⁷

Nossal presents three characteristics of “dominant ideas”. First, dominant ideas about foreign policy are latent and tend not to be expressed by Canadians unless prompted to do so by a survey for example. Second, the context of dominant ideas must be understood, as ideas are seen as emerging from “a nexus of political, social, and economic structures (that) are inextricably tied ... to specific economic and political realities at a given time in a state’s history”. Third, the dominant idea will change over time, usually imperceptibly, because of changes in this nexus of structures that generate the ideas but also at times due to significant events such as war or natural disasters.⁸⁸

Nossal reviews the 20th century and argues that Canada’s foreign policy has been governed by three dominant ideas during this period. Before World War I, the idea of “imperialism”, marked by a strong attachment and devotion to the British Empire, dominated the political views of Canadians. Between the two world wars, partly due to the

86. Steve Lee, “Canadian Values in Canadian Foreign Policy,” *Canadian Foreign Policy* 10, no.1 (Fall 2002): 1.

87. Nossal, *Dominant...*, 138.

88. *Ibid.*, 139-141.

significant cost in human lives the first war had levied on the nation, Canadians embraced “isolationism” to distance themselves from European politics and the threat of war. Finally, in the cold-war era, Nossal contends that isolationism as a means of avoiding war was replaced with the dominant idea of “internationalism”. This was an acceptance of the argument that “peace is indivisible” and that “engagement in world politics, not withdrawal” is the preferred course of action.⁸⁹ Nossal posits that the end of the Cold War has signaled the end of internationalism and a state of flux for the guiding principles of Canadian foreign policy. He advances that “regionalism” may be emerging as the new dominant idea. The primary evidence for this evolution is Canada’s strong willingness to join regional trading blocs, both near and far from Canada’s geographic borders. Nossal lists “nationalism” as an equally important and enduring dominant ideology in the shaping of Canadian public opinion.⁹⁰

Munton and Keating do not share Nossal’s viewpoint about the demise of internationalism and believe that the principle continues to be a central element of Canadian foreign policy. They cite as example the 1999 Kosovo crisis where Canada’s participation in the bombing campaign was defended on the basis of national responsibilities to both NATO and the United Nations. Conversely, critics pointed to the event as “a betrayal of the country’s internationalist traditions and of its record as an international peacekeeper in particular.”⁹¹

Martin and Fortmann question whether public opinion is a legitimate basis for the formulation and execution of foreign policy. They consider that the issue is particularly

89. Ibid., 143-159.

90. Nossal, *Dominant...*, 159-162.

91. Don Munton and Tom Keating, “Internationalism and the Canadian Public,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 34, no.3 (September 2001): 517-518.

relevant for Canada whose political culture is deeply rooted in “the values of internationalism and humanitarianism”. They argue that a primary expression of these values is the consistently strong public support for the participation in UN peacekeeping operations and in NATO and cite a 1997 Goldfarb survey that showed 70 per cent of Canadians “placed a very high (24 percent) or a fairly high (46 percent) priority on its role in NATO. In July 1999, after the bombings in Kosovo, the same pollster got a marginally stronger response (of 73 per cent).”⁹²

Martin and Fortmann also present statistics showing continuously strong support for peacekeeping operations. Beginning with a strong approval rating for participation in the first peacekeeping force, the majority of Canadians have continued to strongly support peacekeeping operations over the years. While the period from 1993 to 1997 and graphic events in Somalia and Bosnia severely tested Canadian resolve and resulted in a drop in approval ratings, polls quickly returned to normal levels. Martin and Fortmann conclude that “public opinion on peacekeeping tends to be stable over time and reacts in reasonable and predictable ways to external threats.”⁹³ Furthermore, while “Canadian public opinion will (not) cling to internationalism regardless of cost” they find “public opinion to be resilient in its internationalism.”⁹⁴

Stairs counters that the general thrust of Canada’s foreign policy is not altruistic in nature but is dominated by economic considerations. In the post-Cold War era, the absence of a direct threat to Canada, and the impact of globalization on domestic interests,

92. Pierre Martin and Michel Fortmann, “Public Opinion: Obstacle, Partner, or Scapegoat,” *Policy Options* (January–February 2001): 66–67.

93. Pierre Martin and Michel Fortmann, “Support for International Involvement in Canadian Public Opinion after the Cold War,” *Canadian Military Journal* (Autumn 2001): 68-70.

94. *Ibid.*, 50.

conspired to focus government attention on material welfare.⁹⁵ Consequently, “Canada’s *real* foreign policy ... is Canada’s *economic* policy.”⁹⁶ He contends that Canadian foreign policy did take a somewhat idealistic turn under Lloyd Axworthy who, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, championed an ambitious “human security” agenda founded in the belief that international politics must be concerned with the individuals within states, and not solely on the states themselves. However, it remains to be seen if Axworthy’s human security agenda will survive his departure as Minister.⁹⁷

Recent surveys of public opinion confirm Stairs’ assertion about the relative priority of domestic interests, but also show strong support for internationalism and the CF in general. In a 1998 survey by the Department of National Defence, 81% of Canadians agreed that the Canadian Forces are “doing a good job”. Shown below, are the percentages of respondents that ‘strongly agreed’ with the corresponding statement:⁹⁸

The Canadian Forces are an important national institution	61%
A strong military is important to Canada’s international standing	54%
Canada’s defence relationship with the U.S is important	67%

The same survey indicated that 70% of Canadians considered that “fighting a war to protect Canadian territory” was a “most important” combat role. Support for participation in United Nations operations and for participation in NATO and NORAD was also

95. Denis Stairs, “The Changing Office and the Changing Environment of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Axworthy Era,” in *Canada Among Nations 2001: The Axworthy Legacy*, ed. Fen Osler Hampson, Norman Hilmer and Maureen Appel Molot, 19-38 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), 29.

96. *Ibid.*, 25.

97. Stairs, *The Changing Office...*, 19-20.

98. Pollara, *Canadian Opinions on the CF and Related Military Issues*, Report Prepared for Department of National Defence (Ottawa: DND, 1998), 7-11.

indicated (numbers in parenthesis show percentages of “strong support” + “somewhat support”):⁹⁹

Peacekeeping Operations	91% (49+42)
Peacemaking Operations	88% (43+45)
NORAD	88% (50+38)
NATO	75% (22+53)

A February 2005 survey reported that 75 per cent disagreed with the statement “Canada shouldn’t have a military” while 22 per cent agreed.¹⁰⁰ However, support for the military does not immediately translate into unqualified support for increased spending on defence. In fact, other statistics point to defence spending as a lower priority for Canadians than domestic issues and programs, validating Stairs’ thesis presented above on the domestic orientation of Canadian foreign policy. The following survey results are typical of recent trends. When asked the question, “Approximately what percentage of any new money, if any, should go to each of the following?”, Canadian CEOs and business leaders responded as follows:¹⁰¹

Paying down the national debt	23%
Health transfer payments	20%
Home security	15%
Military preparedness	14%
Cutting personal income taxes	14%
Cutting corporate taxes	8%
R&D	7%

The need for increased defence spending to close a growing commitment-capability gap has been the subject of ongoing discussion and debate in the media in recent years.

99. Ibid., 23-24.

100. COMPAS, “Survey for the National Post,” (28 February 2005); available from <http://www.compas.ca> ; Internet; accessed 2 April 2005.

101. COMPAS, “Survey for the Financial Post,” (12 November 2001); available from www.compass.ca Internet; accessed 2 April 2005.

According to Granatstein, the public's awareness of defence policy issues has been raised significantly during his tenure as Chair for the Council for Canadian Security in the 21st Century from 2001 to 2005: "... Four years ago, public and parliamentary opinion ignored the CF and cared not a whit for its condition. Today, opinion polls recognize the situation and parliamentary committees and the media call for the government to repair the ruination it has forced upon our servicemen and women."¹⁰² A 2002 COMPAS poll supports this view. While the survey showed the usually strong emphasis on health and education as a spending priority (72 per cent), the survey highlighted that an "extraordinary 49% of respondents indicated a wish for increasing the priority of spending on security and defence."¹⁰³ This was a reversal of polls taken during the period 1992-1997 where, on the average, only 15 per cent of Canadians supported spending more on defence and 50 per cent indicated a preference to spend less on defence.¹⁰⁴ Not surprisingly perhaps, and as shown in Figure 1, this period of high public support for less spending on defence coincides precisely with a period of sharp decline in government defence expenditures.

In sum, Canadian support for peacekeeping has remained strong over the years validating the thesis that internationalism and the core value of nationalism are dominant ideas for Canadians. The dominant idea of internationalism is also manifested by the consistent support in polls for the continuation of an alliance strategy through participation in NATO and NORAD. Recent polling data consistently show a preference for health and

102. Council for Canadian Security in the 21st Century, "Press Release," (14 February 2005); available from www.ccs21.org/main.htm ; Internet; accessed 2 April 2005.

103. COMPAS, "Poll for CanWest Newspapers, Global TV, and the National Post," (11 April 2002); available from www.compass.ca ; Internet; accessed 2 April 2005. It must be noted that the poll addresses a preference for more spending on both security and defence, and that the distinction between the two is probably not always clear in the public mind. Nonetheless, the poll does seem to point to a significant shift in public opinion.

104. Pollara, "Public Opinion Polls," (1992-1997, Quarter 1); available from www.carleton.ca/~ssdata/pollara.html; Internet; accessed 12 April 2005.

social programs, however, the data also show growing support for increased spending on defence. Clearly, as suggested in the 2004 throne speech, the government is presented with the challenge of finding an appropriate balance between Canada's domestic and international policies, and of harmonizing defence, diplomacy, development and trade efforts. The government's Grand Strategy, whether explicitly stated or implied, appears to have enjoyed the support of the electorate, but must also be judged by its impact on the "bottom line".

NATIONAL PROSPERITY

The "bottom line" from a Canadian Forces perspective does not look good. Years of government parsimony in defence spending, particularly during the 1990s following the end of the Cold War, has taken its toll on a military force that has nonetheless managed to answer the call whenever it was needed. As Bland points out, "numerous studies, both public and private, point to the stresses and strains on members of the armed forces and military capabilities resulting from an unprecedented operational tempo and from policies that have demanded for a decade that members of the Canadian Forces 'do more with less'."¹⁰⁵ It is not the purpose of this paper to argue for an increase in defence expenditures to equip and sustain military capabilities to a level that matches the government's penchant for employing its armed forces throughout the world. Rather, this essay seeks a rational answer to a legitimate question: Can the government of Canada claim success for its implied Grand Strategy?

105. Douglas L. Bland, *Canada Without Armed Forces?* (Kingston: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 2004), xi.

The United Nations has developed an interesting measure known as the Human Development Index (HDI) that provides a composite assessment of a country's achievement in various areas of human development. The index is constructed using data from three areas: life expectancy, literacy/educational levels, and standard of living (based on GDP per capita). While it is acknowledged that the HDI is a simplification of the many aspects and indicators of human development, the index is deemed a useful "summary measure of human well-being."¹⁰⁶ Historically, Canada has recorded a very high HDI, certainly as compared to the world, but even as compared to other "high-income" OECD nations. After being ranked 1st in the world for seven straight years in the 1990s, Canada dropped to 8th place in 2003 and is currently ranked 4th. However, the authors of the report warn against the practice of comparing results from year to year due to the evolution in the manner in which the statistics are calculated.¹⁰⁷ Notwithstanding, Canada can be rightly proud of its consistent placement at or near the top of this quality of life measure.¹⁰⁸

Another United Nations measure called the Human Poverty Index (HPI-2) is, according to the authors of the Index, deemed to be more applicable to highly developed nations such as Canada. The HPI-2 combines data from the same three areas as HDI, however, "when variables and dimensions of deprivation are used that are specifically adapted to the situation in these countries and to the different meaning of poverty there (such as social exclusion), there are substantial differences". In a 2004 report, the HPI-2 ranked Canada 12 of 17 high-income OECD countries thereby indicating room for

106. United Nations, "Human Development Report," available from <http://hdr.undp.org/hd>; Internet; accessed 4 April 2005, n. pag.

107. Ibid., n. pag.

108. As noted at the beginning of this paper, the Prime Minister hailed this singular accomplishment as a "tribute ... to the way we have built it", thereby effectively claiming success for the policies of his government .

improvement in reducing poverty in Canada.¹⁰⁹ The HPI-2 data would seem to be consistent with previously discussed public opinion polls that show a distinct preference for government spending on social programs.

Turning to more traditional economic indicators, Canada is by all accounts a wealthy and prosperous nation. According to Peter Drake, former Vice President and Deputy Chief Economist for the Toronto Dominion Bank, the data shows a Canadian economy that is “sounder than 15 years ago and experiencing reasonable growth”. Other economic performance benchmarks, such as inflation and jobless rates are within or near desired levels.¹¹⁰ As shown in Figure 8, Canada’s percentage growth in real GDP has fared well as compared to other G7 countries from an historical perspective.

As noted previously, public support for increased spending on defence has risen in recent years but not at the expense of health and education programs and of debt reduction. There is no evidence to suggest that defence policy has hindered economic growth. On the contrary, while a direct relationship between growth rates of GDP and defence spending cannot be easily drawn or inferred, a negative correlation does exist. For the past three decades or more, a gradual decrease in defence spending has been met with a positive growth in GDP. Therefore, it can be argued that parsimonious spending on defence has not had a negative impact on national prosperity. Given the emphasis placed by Canadians on domestic issues, it follows that the government spending on defence has been met with the tacit approval of Canadians. It would seem that, over the years, the government has found an appropriate balance between domestic, security and defence programs.

109. United Nations, *Human Development...*, n. pag.

110 Peter Drake, “Canada’s Economic Performance,” (lecture to National Securities Studies Course, Canadian Forces College, 18 January 2005), n. pag.

In a democracy, the government is expected to follow the will of the electorate. As discussed above, this implies that policy should be consistent with national core values and interests. Public opinion polls referenced in this paper show that Canadians have supported a foreign policy of internationalism since WWII. Public support for participation in NATO, NORAD, and the United Nations continues today and government foreign and defence policy continue to reflect this national will. Polling data also shows that Canadians are proud of their armed forces, suggesting that government defence policy and expenditure

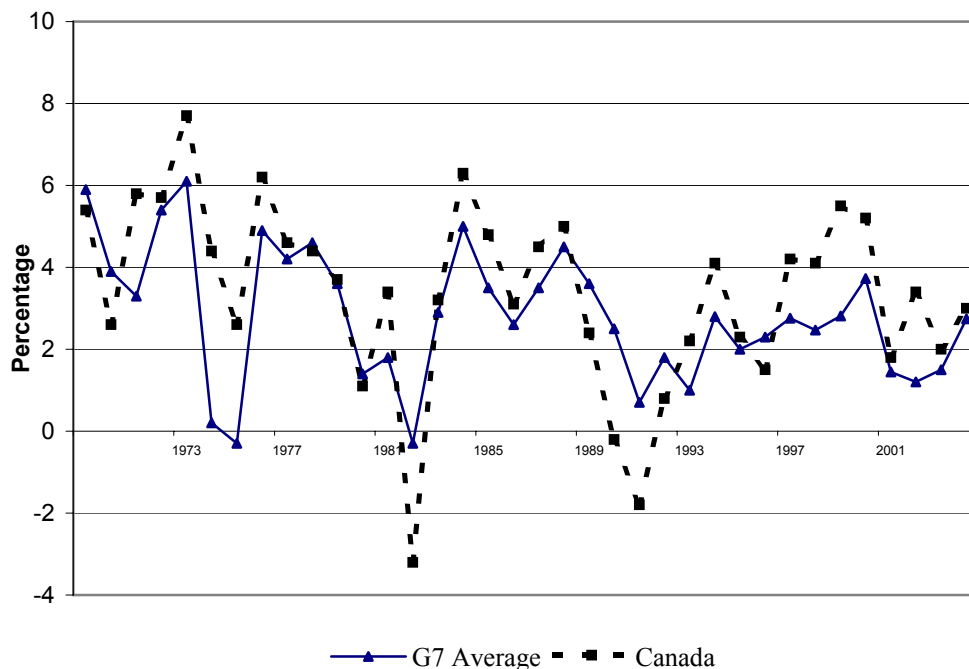


Figure 8– Growth of real GDP

Source: *OECD Economic Outlook*, No 46 (Dec 89), 166; No 61 (Jun 97), A4; No 76 (Dec 04), 167.

has been sufficient to generate a military capability that has fostered a sense of “national pride” in Canadians. Equally important, defence policy and low defence expenditure has been matched with economic prosperity. From both of these perspectives, the government

of Canada can claim that its defence policy, as a component of an overall implied Grand Strategy, has been successful.

However, the bright picture painted by economic and human development indicators does not reveal the fact that years of reduced defence funding have resulted in an extremely fragile military capability that, some argue, now requires large infusions of capital if it is to continue to play a relevant role in the government's Grand Strategy. As Bland points out, "what is not as well understood by Canadians and Canada's political community is the national crisis of 'the future force' ... It is a gathering crisis caused by insufficient attention to and funding support for the people, equipment, training establishments, and logistical support facilities, among other things, that are needed to provide credible military capabilities tomorrow."¹¹¹

In February 2002, the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence agreed with Bland's analysis when it observed that "with (the) capabilities (of the Canadian Forces) in decline, and new resources unavailable, the Canadian Forces are unable to sustain their commitments beyond a marginal level."¹¹² The Committee goes on to recommend significant increases in personnel and funding levels. In October 2002, the Government of Canada response to this report agreed that "our armed forces have been stretched in the recent past because of the very high operational tempo" and offered as remedy that "the Government is currently examining Canada's defence program and

111. Bland, *Canada Without...*, xi.

112. Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, "Canadian Security and Military Preparedness," (February 2002) ; available from <http://www.parl.gc.ca/37/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/defe-e/rep-e/rep05feb02-e.htm>; Internet; accessed 23 March 2005, 16.

capabilities in order to ensure that they are affordable, sustainable and effectively structured to carry out defence missions and promote Canadian interests and values.”¹¹³

In April 2004, the Prime Minister seemed to signal that this examination of defence programs and capabilities had come to some conclusions when he indicated that “the time has come to take strategic decisions and measures ... to enhance Canada’s role within the community of nations.” In this context, he outlined a number of “key principles” to guide the development of defence policy to ensure that the investment in defence focus on “transforming our Forces to ensure they are capable, useable, deployable, sustainable and interoperable.”¹¹⁴ This statement, coupled with the 2005 Federal Budget¹¹⁵ announcement of significant increases in the defence budget over the next five years, seems to indicate that the government has concluded that an increased investment in defence was indeed consistent with the requirement to promote Canadian interests and values. Military force planners and their supporters are no doubt hopeful that this long awaited resolve will withstand the test of time.

CONCLUSION

This paper has reviewed the Canadian defence policy of the past 40 years and found that it has continued to rest largely upon a strategy of alliance. However, while the government of Canada has sustained its participation in NATO, NORAD, and United

113. Canada, “Canadian Security and Military Preparedness: The Government’s Response to the Report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence,” (October 2002); available from http://www.psepc-sppcc.gc.ca/publications/national_security/pdf/Kenny_report_e.pdf; Internet; accessed 14 April 2005, n. pag.

114. Office of the Prime Minister, “Address by Prime Minister Paul Martin at CFB Gagetown, New Brunswick,” (14 April 2004); available from <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news.asp?id=172> ; Internet; accessed 22 February 2005, n. pag.

115. Department of Finance, “Budget 2005: Delivering on Commitments,”(23 February 2005); available from <http://www.fin.gc.ca/budtoce/2005/budliste.htm> ; Internet; accessed 14 April 2005, n. pag.

Nations operations, defence spending has been low and in a constant state of decline since the Second World War leading Bland to observe that Claxton was the “father of the commitment-capability gap.”¹¹⁶ The paper has reviewed arguments that defence spending has been and continues to be too low for a rich country like Canada and that this paucity has resulted in a loss of strategic influence for this country, and has presented the opposing view that defence is already sufficiently funded and more emphasis on “soft power” should guide the government approach to international policy.

In the 2004 Speech from the Throne, the government acknowledged the need to rationally balance the competing demands for the public purse and to establish an appropriate strategy that harmonizes defence, diplomacy, development, and trade efforts. In a sense, the situation is analogous to one faced by private and corporate investors in determining an investment strategy and a stock portfolio that will maximize a return on investment. From a national perspective, the return on investment in the “defence stock” must seek to achieve a measure of national and global security, not only for its altruistic value, but also for the positive impact a secure world will have on trade and hence on Canada’s economy.

While it is acknowledged that an investment in defence has the potential to increase strategic influence, quantifying this outcome is difficult. It may be, as Gen Thériault suggests, that “the notion of any Canadian influence (as a by-product of defence policy) is more delusive and presumptuous than real...”¹¹⁷ However, the impact of government policy on the economy is more directly measured or at least more easily inferred. National prosperity is effectively the government’s “bottom line” as a healthy economy provides the

116. Bland, *Canada’s National Defence...*, 6.

117. G.C.E. Thériault, “Reflections on Canadian Defence Policy and its Underlying Structural Problems,” *Canadian Defence Quarterly* 22, no. 6 (July 1993): 6.

ammunition needed to target programs that in turn generate the public support needed to win elections. Therefore, national prosperity is ultimately the measure of effectiveness of a Grand Strategy that is explicitly formulated or otherwise implied. If economic benchmarks and human development indices are accepted as prime indicators of a successful Grand Strategy, then the government of Canada can point to an enviable return on investment for its “national stock portfolio” and claim that a minimalist approach to defence spending has been successful. Furthermore, the government can produce polling data that shows consistent public support for this strategy in the past.

However, public opinion polls in recent years have shown support for increased defence spending. This trend, supported and perhaps fueled by the concerns about an imperiled military repeatedly expressed by various sources in the media, may be prompting the government to externalize its Grand Strategy. Prime Minister Paul Martin has indicated a willingness to embrace this challenge, and with the arrival of Budget 2005, has perhaps signaled the Government’s recognition that Canada’s Grand Strategy requires increased spending on defence. Further study is required to assess whether announced increases are sufficient to address the impact of the new “Pax Americana” on Canada’s defence policy. Will Canada continue to enjoy, as Sutherland observed years ago, “almost automatically the ‘special relationship’ with the United States which it is the purpose of other nations to achieve”?¹¹⁸ Will the Grand Strategy continue to exact the desired return on investment in terms of economic prosperity and public support? It is possible that Canada is at a turning point in its history. The damage wrought by years of neglect may be reversed and the military instrument of national power will not be reduced to ‘just waving the flag’.

118. Sutherland, *Report ...*, 13.

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