

Beyond Afghanistan

An International Security
Agenda for Canada

EDITED BY JAMES FERGUSSON
AND FRANCIS FURTADO



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Introduction

Canada's combat role in Afghanistan formally ended in March 2014. As with most if not all of Canada's post-Cold War combat operations, it produced a welter of media reports, op-ed pieces, articles, and books about Canada's commitment to Afghanistan, its role in the military campaign, and Canadian foreign policy in general.

Afghanistan fit nicely into a post-Cold War international security paradigm that focused on failed and failing states, terrorism, human security, the Canadian-inspired Responsibility to Protect doctrine, and Western-led military intervention in far-flung places, driven as much by humanitarian considerations as by traditional national security interests. In so doing, Afghanistan and the post-Cold War paradigm largely swept traditional international security issues – related to great power politics, interstate rivalries, and weapons of mass destruction – from the public policy debate in Canada.

This is not to suggest that, across the range of Canadian international security policy issues, these traditional questions entirely disappeared. Rather, these issues took a backseat in the public policy debate.

The end of the Afghanistan mission, along with the advent of a new Liberal government in Canada and the prospect of a new administration in the US, presents an opportunity to re-examine Canada's international security policy, especially in areas that have been neglected and will return to shape future Canadian international security policy. This is not to

suggest that the “new” postwar security issues, of which Afghanistan was an exemplar, will entirely disappear. Certainly these issues have featured prominently in Syria. But it is to suggest that traditional international security issues and concerns are likely to return to prominence, and these “new” issues will likely become peer, not preferred, competitors.

The international security landscape is changing. One can see it geographically, with the rise of China, the resurgence of Russia, and the perceived relative decline of the United States. One can see it functionally, with the return of nuclear weapons on the international security agenda, the development of new generations of advanced ballistic missile delivery systems and their counterpart, missile defence systems, and the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian civil war. But where Canadian policy stands on these changes is largely unknown, and where Canadian policy might or should go is an important yet open question.

Certainly, these traditional policy issues were not entirely ignored by the media, the academic community, or the public at large since the beginning of the Afghanistan mission in 2001. Specific events on the international stage, such as the Israeli military interventions in Gaza in 2008 and 2014, occasioned short-lived public debates on Canada’s support for Israel. At times, China emerged on the public agenda but largely in terms of the old debate on economics, trade, and human rights. The Canadian response to the American strategic pivot to Asia largely passed unnoticed. The question of Canadian participation in the American continental-based missile defence system captured the nation’s attention in the fall of 2004, but since then it has simply disappeared from public view. Little if any attention was paid to strategic arms control and disarmament issues, front and centre on the public agenda during the Cold War. This period also saw the rise of greater government policy interest in Latin America, yet the implications for Canada of the shifting political environment in the region, exemplified by the policies of Venezuela, were ignored.

These and several other important issues are the central focus of this volume of reflections on contemporary and future Canadian international security policy. *Beyond Afghanistan* is designed to highlight the evolution of Canadian policy over the past fifteen years and to provide a map for where Canada might go in the future. Its rationale is also informed by the absence of any formal overarching government policy

statement, or white paper, on Canadian international security policy since the Martin government's 2005 International Policy Statement and the Harper government's 2008 Canada First Defence Strategy. Both are clearly outdated, constructed in a different international security environment. In this regard, this volume represents an "implicit" call for a review of Canadian policy, and its contents provide a foundation for such a review.

Beyond Afghanistan, with contributions by leading senior scholars in the field, a new generation of experts, and former government policy officials, is divided into three parts as a means to organize the debate. [Part 1](#) examines the evolution and nature of Canadian policy on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). [Part 2](#) provides a regional focus for understanding Canadian policy, and [Part 3](#) looks at key functional strategic issues confronting Canada.

NATO has long been a central pillar of Canadian international security policy, along with Canada's relationship, of course, with the United States. Yet, over the past decade or so, not surprisingly, discussions of this policy have almost exclusively revolved around the Afghanistan mission. In this regard, the debate on the continuing relevance of NATO for Canada was never really, ironically, about NATO itself. Instead, it was about the willingness of NATO allies to share the combat burden of the war in Afghanistan. All of a sudden, the value of NATO to Canada was not a given anymore.

After Afghanistan, NATO returned to the shadows, only to be reawakened by recent events in Ukraine. Perhaps it is time to reconsider NATO's place in Canadian international security policy. To set the foundation for a conversation on the place of NATO in Canadian policy, it is useful to recall the original forces that led to Canada's postwar NATO vocation, its breakout from pre-Second World War isolationism, and the relevance and utility of this past to a future debate on Canada in NATO. Denis Stairs traces the forces that led to NATO becoming a central pillar of Canadian policy and their relevance today. In a similar vein, Douglas Bland examines the military side of the equation by discussing the problems of alliance military leadership, the initial proposals for organizing an alliance structure for military cooperation, and the reasons these initial proposals were rejected in favour of an

integrated command structure in response to the threat posed by the Soviet Union. Today, however, Bland argues, this structure needs to be re-examined relative to Canadian interests and the European threat environment, and consideration should be given to the utility of Canadian General Charles Foulkes's original proposal for an alliance planning structure.

Of course, it is not only these distant, historically based considerations that need to be included in evaluating the future place of NATO in Canadian policy. More recent factors also need to be understood. In this regard, Danford Middlemiss recognizes that alliance membership has significant implications for independent national policy making. Starting from Canada's immediate response to the 9/11 attacks and stretching to Canada's commitment to provide Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, Middlemiss traces the grinding influence of alliance decision making on Canada, an influence (a constant feature for any alliance member) that requires close attention in future policy considerations.

In parallel, David Haglund recalls that NATO has not always been a given in Canadian policy. During the initial years of the Chrétien government, Canadian policy makers looked to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as the future primary European security institution for Canada with the possibility that NATO would be assigned to the "dustbin of history." On this occasion, as on others, Haglund explains why such reports of the forthcoming death of NATO have been premature, especially with regard to Canadian policy. Nonetheless, his analysis raises the important question for future policy debate of alternatives to NATO as the central pillar of Canadian international security policy in terms of Canada's European vocation.

To conclude this first section, Alexander Moens distills the values and interests underpinning how Canadians came to think about NATO and its place in Canadian national security strategy. Inasmuch as the "first principles" of Canadian policy were historically rooted in the United Nations, Canadian governments have steadily turned to the accumulated operational experience embodied in NATO to get things done, a perspective that Moens suggests is unlikely to change in the future.

Although the idea of a "global" NATO has largely receded, not least because of the re-emphasis on NATO's primary European collective

defence mission in response to events in Ukraine, this idea relates directly to Canadian policy approaches and options beyond Europe, the focus of [Part 2](#) of this volume.

Andrea Charron begins this discussion by examining the latest iteration of a periodic Canadian fascination with the Arctic. She makes the case for a more focused and disciplined Canadian strategy for the Arctic. Although NATO represents one option for Canadian security in the Arctic, she makes it clear that this option is a non-starter for the Canadian government and, regardless of its potential merits, is unlikely to be taken up in the future. Furthermore, Charron raises significant concerns about arguments around an emerging military threat to Canadian interests in the Arctic, and she calls for a more focused debate on Canadian policy, especially regarding the best use of national resources, including defence, in the harsh and costly environment of the Arctic.

Turning to the Canada-US defence relationship, Joseph Jockel and Joel Sokolsky explore the history and future of the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) as the centrepiece of bilateral defence and security cooperation. They suggest that, inasmuch as there have been “swings and roundabouts” in the debate over a greater or lesser role for NORAD since 9/11, fifteen years later both governments seem to be happy to have left it as is. Broadening the discussion, Hal Klepak turns to Canada’s security role in Latin America. He chronicles how Canadian involvement in the region has adapted to the circumstances, both foreign and domestic. At day’s end, despite the best of intentions and setting aside a long history of operating abroad under multilateral mandates, Canadian security involvement in Latin America will remain a discretionary matter, governed by the finances at hand and the ebb and flow of political situations within Latin American states.

Kim Richard Nossal extends the geographic reach of the discussion to the Asia-Pacific region, a staple of the Canadian foreign policy debate since the early 1980s. Nossal notes that, insofar as Canadian international security policy makers have recognized the importance of the region, they have not developed a long-term view of how best to use Canadian resources. Nossal sees Canada’s approach to the rise of China as consistent with the long-standing “astrategic” nature of Canadian

policy making, implying that the time has come for Canada to go beyond a focus on economic/trade questions to consider future Canadian security requirements and options.

David Dewitt and Bessma Momani conclude the regional survey by providing a perspective on Canada's role in the Middle East. After recounting the evolution of Canadian policy in the region, they recognize that the stances of individual NATO countries, including Canada, will be shaped by the national political, economic, and foreign policy interests that the region puts in play.

From there, the volume moves on in [Part 3](#) to what one might call abiding security considerations in Canadian defence and security policy, considerations that have recurrently confronted Canadian policy makers and are independent of regional developments. Francis Furtado sets the stage for understanding the nature of Canadian public policy debates from the perspective of two schools of thought, which have been locked in combat, concerning the role and purpose of the Canadian Forces and defence spending. Captured by their own myths and now confronted by fiscal realities, this sets the stage for a rigid future debate that stands to undermine a sensible discussion that would form the basis of sound decisions in the defence and security portfolio.

Although Canada is not a nuclear weapons state, nuclear weapons and arms control have long been central to Canadian defence and foreign policy debates. In the emerging international security environment, these discussions are set to return to centre stage. Douglas Ross examines the trajectory of US strategic nuclear weapons policy over the past eight years and traces the shift from strategic nuclear parity with Russia and China to US strategic as well as conventional military superiority. Ross argues that Canada and other allies need to increase defence spending on conventional weapons as a means to reduce Washington's reliance on nuclear options in responding to certain contingencies and as a means to move forward with nuclear disarmament.

On the arms control and disarmament side of the equation, Gordon Vachon gives his sense of a policy field that has been fallow since the end of the Cold War. Although he suggests that there is reason for hope, Canadian officials need to find a focus if Canada wants to influence the arms control and disarmament agenda in the future.

Finally, James Fergusson revisits issues that have walked alongside Canada's commitment to deterrence and arms control: ballistic missile defence and its close cousin, the military use of space. He identifies the long-standing government preference of keeping missile defence and military use of space separate and off the public agenda. In so doing, Canadian governments have consistently failed to lay the foundation for a future intelligent public debate on these strategic issues when they resurface.

To be fair, Canadian international security policy has been and will continue to be a complicated matter. In that sense, it is like a number of Canadian defence issues. The task of balancing defence, sovereignty, alliance relations, resource questions, and arms control has never been easy for a country for which such issues have always been somewhat discretionary. That said, there has never been an alternative to continually returning to debate the complicated issues involved. It is in this spirit that we, and the contributing authors, offer this volume.

Way Back Then and Now: NATO and the Canadian Interest

Denis Stairs

This volume offers a variety of perspectives on what the Canadian interest in the North Atlantic alliance might be in the future given the end of military operations in Afghanistan under NATO auspices. The discussion that follows, however, is intended as a background overview to place the current policy problem in a longer-range perspective. The discussion is divided into two main parts. The first part is intended to remind us of how Ottawa perceived Canada's North Atlantic interests in the late 1940s, when NATO was created, and how it pursued them. The tale has been told often, and at much greater length, from both supportive and critical vantage points.¹ My purpose here is simply to identify in a reasonable, if schematic, fashion the interests that key Canadian players of the day had in mind, along with the factors that determined them, while avoiding the trap of over-generalized myth-making.

The second part, briefer than the first, fast-forwards to more recent times and asks to what extent these conditions of circumstance and interest, real or perceived, still prevail. Since many of them clearly do not, the implications of the changes involved are explored with particular reference to Canadian policy. Thoughts on such matters, needless to say, are bound to be somewhat speculative, and they open the door to the influence of unreliably subjective opinion and raw prejudice. Such,

however, is the unavoidable risk of navigating from a reasonably visible past, through a still opaque present, to an indiscernible future.

Canadian Interests and Preferences in NATO's Founding Politics

For Ottawa, the creation of NATO was a fallback enterprise. The government's first preference had been the United Nations and its embodiment of the principle of collective security. That principle had failed dismally when institutionalized during the interwar years in the League of Nations and embodied in the famous Article 10 of its covenant. A strong argument has been made that Canada was a leading player in the political process that effectively incapacitated the article in the early 1920s and ensured that it would come to naught.² The hard reality was that the collective security principle was beyond the grasp of the state system of the day. In its pure form, it still is. Canada obviously cannot be faulted for that underlying circumstance, but it certainly can be faulted for giving so warm a welcome to the inevitable and for working so hard to ensure that the league's members, Canada included, would not be embarrassed by an obligation to take up arms against an aggressor state in contexts that they thought contrary to their national interests.

The Canadian attitude in the interwar period reflected the assumption that Canada was immune to the threat of invasion and hence could be a provider, but not a consumer, of collective security. This geopolitical premise changed dramatically during the Second World War. Canadian territory could no longer be regarded as a fireproof house, if ever it really was one. German U-boats sent ships to the bottom even in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and advances in military technology, especially in the air, were rapidly diminishing the value of distance and topography as natural defences against military attack.

Moreover, the Americans were unlikely to retreat to an isolationist posture, as they had done, along with many Canadians, after the First World War. Instead, they wanted to play a major role in ruling the global roost. It followed that an isolationist strategy in the security field would no longer be useful north of the border either. The potential danger was not that Canada, and others, might be activist and the Americans not but that the Americans, and others, would be activist and the Canadians not. The appropriate response in these new circumstances, therefore,

was not to remain aloof but to take energetic part in the game. Hence, Ottawa, and particularly officials in the Department of External Affairs, concluded that Canada should play a busily constructive role in the process by which the postwar order would be created.

Their aspirations were not entirely presumptuous. At the end of the war, some analysts ranked Canada fourth in the hierarchy of power in the international state system. That status, however, resulted in part from so many other players having been brought down by the cost of waging war and the devastation of their respective territorial domains. But in the late 1940s and through the 1950s, Canada's "presence" was no less real for being of uncertain duration. It made holding high ambitions credible, especially when the ambitions themselves were benignly intended and could be advanced in a moderate spirit.

The postwar security system that the Canadians preferred would be as multilateral as possible. Regionally based alternatives, including the Commonwealth of Nations variation on the theme advocated for a time by Winston Churchill, were regarded as much less attractive. For starters, regional security institutions, as well as those rooted in the less geographically cohesive remnants of empire, would each be dominated by a great power. Such a phenomenon could easily lead to a system in which smaller states would be subordinate within their respective regions to the pre-eminent regional player and excluded from the task of managing global security at large.

In the present context, the observations of hard-headed realist and Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs Hume Wrong, in a memo on postwar international organization dated as early as August 7, 1943, are particularly apropos because they have a "North Atlantic" implication.

From the Canadian point of view, there is much to be said against great emphasis being laid on regional methods, especially if the regions are to be taken as continental land masses. In such a system Canada would be in the American region but would also be intimately concerned with security in the European and Asiatic regions. Emphasis on regionalism would tend to lead the forces of the United States that are opposed to international commitments to concentrate

on security in the American region as the particular sphere of the US, and to argue for the assumption of no responsibility for European stability. We have in the last four years had a striking demonstration of the truth of the doctrine that peace is indivisible in the modern world, and therefore that security everywhere is the concern of all countries. Furthermore, “regions” from the security point of view can no longer be identified with continents. It is more realistic to regard the North Atlantic area as a security region than the continents of North and South America. While regional bodies may play a valuable part, it seems desirable that we should support a world system on which any regional bodies would depend.³

As it eventually turned out, Churchill and those of analogous mind lost the argument, and, much to Ottawa’s relief, the proposed UN apparatus, including its diverse array of specialized agencies, became the core institution of the initial postwar security system. The Canadians were not entirely happy with the great power Dumbarton Oaks draft of the UN constitutional charter, and along with many others they had a vigorous go at amending it at the San Francisco conference in 1945. Their campaign resulted in some modest successes, but of course neither they nor others among the dissatisfied got everything they wanted. The final draft of the charter thus emerged from the San Francisco negotiations, especially in the security field, with many of the concert system characteristics that had been written into it earlier by the great powers still intact. For officials in Ottawa, therefore, the final product was not an ideal outcome. But it was the best of available options, and it could ultimately evolve in ways that would make it more congenial to smaller players. In the meantime, Canada could use the new organization as a forum for making the best of its middling assets in attempting to amplify its diplomatic influence and as a source of opportunities for moderating, however marginally and always with the help of others, the dominant impacts on international security affairs of the permanent five, the United States most prominent among them.

The hope, however, and certainly the confidence that global peace would be preserved by a combination of great power amity in the UN Security Council and a broadly based international willingness to deal

briskly, and if necessary militarily, with aggressor states, did not survive for long. Even at the start, the system could hardly be called robust, and the relentless course of events that had already begun to divide the so-called West from the so-called East by the spring of 1945 soon destroyed all but a few small glimmers of faith that the new organization could be relied on to achieve its long-term collective-security objective. The Gouzenko revelations of Soviet espionage activity were brought to the attention of Canadian authorities as early as September 1945 and soon played a significant role in the further breakdown of trust between the Soviet Union and its Western counterparts. The concert system premise of the UN collective security apparatus was that there would be a continuation in the postwar period of the cooperation of the victorious great powers in securing the international environment. That premise would clearly fail. Alternative security mechanisms, even if they could be envisaged as complements to the UN organization rather than as substitutes for it, would be required.

The ruminations, with their “North Atlantic” focus, articulated by Wrong in 1943 began at this point to resurface in the Department of External Affairs. Not all Canadian foreign service officials agreed on the real origins of the developing East-West conflict. Some thought that it was rooted in traditional geopolitical mechanisms. Others thought that the contest was ideological: a matter of fundamental disagreement on civilizational questions. Many blamed the breakdown primarily on the Soviet Union, but a few thought that the Americans were most at fault. Those drawn to geopolitical modes of analysis were naturally inclined to think in terms of bipolar standoffs and hence to be critical of the behaviour of decision makers in Moscow and Washington alike. Whatever their views of the processes of cause and effect, however, there could be little doubt among them on the matter of which side Canada should support. That question was easily answered by a profound comity of perceived Canadian and Western interests deeply embedded in Canada’s circumstances: its history, geography, patterns of economic exchange, and political culture.

Reflections on the practical question of how to proceed were not long in coming, though fine-tuning the Canadian position was an incremental process affected at each stage by developments elsewhere. Churchill

delivered his famous “Iron Curtain” address in Fulton, Missouri, on March 5, 1946. In reporting on it to Ottawa in his capacity as Canada’s ambassador in Washington, Lester B. Pearson observed that, if the growing divide between East and West could not be resolved diplomatically, and if the United Nations could not be reformed in a way that would guarantee the effectiveness of the collective security mechanism in the face of the Soviet use of the great power veto in the Security Council, “a new organization must be created which, as the guardian of the peace of all nations, and not merely the English-speaking ones, can function without the Russians and, as a last resort, against them.”⁴ Pearson made much the same argument in an address at Princeton University two months later, noting that UN membership did not preclude the creation of “a more limited but firmer structure for collective security, with those countries [he had the North Atlantic countries in mind] sharing our views.”⁵ In analytical terms, the concept of collective security was rendered compatible here with the very different power-balancing mechanism intrinsic to the more selective concept of collective defence.

By mid-1947, this general argument was advanced both in more detail and by more voices, with much of the discussion stimulated by Escott Reid. In the summer, Louis St. Laurent, then the secretary of state for external affairs, briefly referred to the idea in the House of Commons, and shortly thereafter he accepted Pearson’s recommendation that Reid be allowed to float a trial balloon on the subject at an open conference sponsored by the Canadian Institute of Public Affairs.⁶ St. Laurent himself subsequently floated the same idea internationally in an address, composed by Reid, to the UN General Assembly, though at that stage the proposal was still promulgated as a second-best alternative; the preference was still UN reform that would release the Security Council from the paralytic effect of the great power veto.⁷

Throughout this period, similar conceptions were considered in both the United States and the United Kingdom, and George Kennan was developing an analysis of East-West relations that ultimately resulted in the articulation of the so-called containment doctrine. The Americans were initially inhibited, however, by their expectation that there would be powerful congressional resistance to the notion that the United States should commit itself to a defensive alliance with other powers in

peacetime. As it turned out, therefore, the first substantive initiative was actually taken in early 1948 not by the Americans but by the British in the form of a proposal for the creation of a Western Union of like-minded European powers for purposes of mutual defence. The Brussels Treaty, signed by Britain, France, and the Benelux countries in the middle of March, was the immediate outcome.

But the Western Union was a combination of the weak and the vulnerable, and even before the treaty was formally concluded, in an atmosphere pervaded by escalating tension as a result of the coup in Czechoslovakia and growing Soviet pressure on Norway, Prime Minister Clement Attlee was asking for a meeting of Canadian, American, and British officials in Washington to consider the creation of a broader, and hence more muscular, security alliance – “a regional pact of mutual assistance in which all the countries threatened by a Russian move on the Atlantic could participate.”⁸ Thus began the institutional construction of what was soon commonly described as a North Atlantic community.

From the purely strategic point of view, this undertaking had one overriding objective: bringing American military capacity to bear on the defence of Western Europe. In practical terms, that capacity was ultimately manifested in nuclear weapons. At the end of the Second World War, the Western powers, preoccupied with the daunting challenge of economic recovery, had rapidly run down their conventional military capabilities. The Soviet Union, not being so confined by the expectations of electorates and having military occupations that it wished to sustain in Eastern Europe, had taken a different course. The Red Army had maintained its presence there and elsewhere, and at strengths that Western observers regarded as alarming. Certainly, Soviet military capabilities in the East were far greater than those of Western counterparts. Countervailing them would require both an American commitment and American assets, especially nuclear weapons. So strong was the faith in this solution that creation of the alliance was not immediately accompanied by rearmament initiatives. The Canadian minister of national defence actually advised the House of Commons in Ottawa that alliance membership would make Canada’s own defence effort cheaper, not more expensive.

The creation of NATO, in short, was fundamentally an enterprise in military deterrence, and its target was an adversary perceived for various reasons to be militarily, politically, and ideologically aggressive. Whether the perceptions were well founded or not can still be debated, as they were at the time, but the underlying consensus on the need to mobilize an effective response was clear, and it was expressed, in part, by the NATO construct.

That this was so did not mean, however, that those involved had no other interests at stake or in mind. For the Canadians, as for others, one of those interests was to maximize the extent to which the alliance would facilitate a multilateral approach to making decisions pertinent to the security of the North Atlantic area. This, like their support for the alliance's underlying defensive military purpose, was a natural extension of their early conception of the United Nations. Great power "concerts" within the UN system were likely to be sources of discomfort for its lesser members, even if in some measure they were the precondition for great power participation. Great power dominance, and dominance by the United States in particular, could be similarly uncomfortable for smaller NATO allies, Canada included, not only because they might sometimes differ from the Americans on policy preferences, but also because an obvious display of unqualified subordination would be hard for their own domestic constituencies to swallow. In the NATO case, as in the UN case, therefore, Canadian officials did what they could to close the gap.

In pursuing this objective, there were naturally disagreements within the foreign service over how to proceed, particularly over the perennial question of how far Canada should try to go in cases where American resistance was strong and where attitudes in the US Congress complicated the diplomatic scene. Of the three senior players most actively involved, it is reasonable to suggest that Escott Reid was usually the one who wished to push the hardest, that Hume Wrong (confronting the tough realities in Washington first-hand) was the least given to tilting at windmills, and that Lester Pearson was somewhere in between the two, often sympathetic to Reid's positions in principle but also aware that pressing Washington too hard could have counterproductive consequences in the end.

Such were among the complicated calculations of affairs of state, and the outcomes often depended in part on personal idiosyncrasies derived from differing combinations of experience, temperament, and perspective. How these attitudes played out in Ottawa over the NATO question, however, need not be addressed here. It will suffice instead to focus on the Canadian preferences ultimately advanced in the negotiations. Of these preferences, three are particularly relevant.

The first Canadian preference was to join with the Europeans in strongly opposing the early American view that the job of deterring the Soviet Union could be done well enough by means of a unilateral American guarantee – by a promise, in effect, to enter the fray should the Western powers in Europe be attacked by a third party. As Pearson observed to Prime Minister St. Laurent, this action would smell “of charity (in the worst sense of the word).” “The Western European democracies,” he went on, were “not beggars asking for our charity, but ... potential allies whose assistance we need in order to be able to defend ourselves.” Needed, therefore, was a “multilateral security agreement” – an arrangement that would constitute, in Prime Minister Attlee’s language, “a bold move to raise in the hearts and minds and spirits of all those in the world who loved freedom that confidence and faith which will restore their vigour.” This entailed a working partnership in the pursuit of shared objectives, not a mechanism that would highlight Europe’s dependency on the United States and undermine the development of a genuine Atlantic community. By implication, such a mechanism would expose Canada’s dependency on the United States, too, particularly in the North American context.⁹

That this danger was real was soon demonstrated. The American willingness to abandon the unilateral guarantee model in favour of an institutionalized multilateral alliance followed passage in the US Senate of the Vandenberg Resolution, which, in effect, gave American executive branch negotiators a political licence from the legislative branch of the government to proceed. But the American conception, whatever the rhetorical overlay of an Atlantic community might imply, was that the alliance was really aimed at preserving the security of Western Europe. For the Americans, the challenge to the security of North America was in a different compartment, one more suited to a bilateral North

American response. This was the “twin pillar” view of North Atlantic security arrangements, with one pillar in Europe and the other in North America. It was not a view that the Canadians were ever able to excise, however insistently they claimed that North American security agreements were implicitly, if not formally, NATO-connected instruments by virtue of falling within the North Atlantic area and that, in principle, the Europeans were as obligated to come to the defence of North America as Canada and the United States were to the defence of Western Europe. On this, the Canadians never gave up the argument, though after many years they did give up making it. But neither did they ever win the substance of it.

The second Canadian preference, which also had multilateralist implications, was embedded in Ottawa’s assessment of the nature of the Soviet threat and the kind of response that would be effective in dealing with it. Such a response revealed a multifaceted conception of what the Atlantic community really was and ought to be. More specifically, the Canadians shared the general view that the Soviet Union needed to be presented with very good reasons for concluding that a Red Army invasion of Western European territory was an unpalatable option. But this itself would not be an adequate response because the Soviet challenge seemed to be as much civilizational as military. In the late 1940s, communist political parties were doing well, by legitimate electoral means, in some of the Western European countries, France and Italy in particular. Communist doctrines offered a potentially attractive alternative to those suffering from severe economic and social hardships in the dislocating aftermath of the Second World War. Menacing armies could almost certainly be deterred by persuasive displays of countervailing capabilities. But in Reid’s view especially, the prevention of political radicalization from within could prove to be a much harder nut to crack.

His practical conclusion was not very different from the one articulated in more recent times in response to so-called terrorist attacks. If communism or radical politics fed on misery, despair, and disaffection, then the key to dealing with it was to address those underlying causes. It followed that NATO should be concerned not merely with the task of collective defence but also with proactively improving the economic and social conditions of citizens, with enhancing their confidence in

their own political institutions and processes, and with reminding them more broadly of the premises and advantages of the liberal democratic political tradition. Thus, the security agenda had to encompass political, economic, and social challenges as well as the military challenge, and the allies would need to cooperate to reinvigorate the fundamental principles underlying the liberal civilization that they collectively represented. Here was the rationale for the “Canadian Article,” Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty. To even the young in our own time, the case made for it should have a familiar ring.¹⁰

Reaction to the Canadian view among the other potential allies was mixed. The American position was that the alliance was a military enterprise and that other kinds of problems would be dealt with by other initiatives, such as the Marshall Plan and the Bretton Woods international economic system. In the end, it seems, Washington was persuaded to accept the article partly because of a direct St. Laurent appeal to President Truman, who appears to have accepted the prime minister’s testimony that the alliance could not be sold in Quebec as a purely military undertaking and partly because American officials thought that it would turn out to be a dead letter anyway. The British, also skeptical, fell in line more easily, in part because of their general desire to accommodate Canadian sensibilities but perhaps also because they, too, thought the initiative harmless. Some of the European powers, notably Belgium, France, and the Netherlands, offered their support more readily, but others appear to have been indifferent. In any case, the Canadians won the day.

The victory ultimately did not amount to much, since little of practical consequence ever flowed from it.¹¹ But the enterprise nonetheless demonstrated the government’s interest in equipping the NATO instrument with a potential capacity for cultivating a multilateral community of like-minded North Atlantic powers across a number of dimensions in a way that would help to immerse parts of the Canada-US relationship in a larger North Atlantic context. The company of agreeable friends can infuse a working committee with a congenial atmosphere.

The third Canadian preference in founding NATO related to membership: Who should be in, and who should be out? Here, the primary Canadian concerns focused on Portugal and on proposals for the

inclusion of a number of Mediterranean polities (Italy, Algeria, Greece, and Turkey). The argument against Portugal was that it failed to meet the normative premises of the Atlantic community concept because it was not a liberal democracy. In the end, however, the Canadians, along with others of similar mind, gave way to the Americans, focused more on ensuring that the strategically significant Azores would be brought inside the NATO house. Italian membership was supported by France, and the French view that Italy was so threatened by communist elements at home that it would be prudent to include it in the alliance ultimately won the day, along with the argument that the treaty should also extend to the Algerian departments of France.

The initial Canadian response to the membership issue thus lost the toss in the negotiations. But in the present context, it is the substance, not the effectiveness, of Canada's argument that warrants attention. Potentially adverse reactions at home aside, the Canadian concern about Italy was that its inclusion would make it much more difficult later to exclude Greece and Turkey, which, arguably, it did. If these states were also admitted, then their membership, in the Canadian view, would weaken the alliance by rendering its composition much less homogeneous and its commitments much more diffuse. They would also make it "more difficult to use the alliance as a chrysalis for a North Atlantic community." It would be better, in sum, for the Mediterranean region to be provided with protective arrangements separately devised and negotiated so that a strongly integrated North Atlantic community could grow and prosper without having to accommodate inhibiting distractions from another geographical area.¹²

In practice, of course, NATO was to remain primarily a military undertaking. It was both multilateral and trans-Atlantic, but the security assets under its control were in the European theatre. In a sense, it was not so much a two-pillar as a three-pillar concept, with two of the pillars (Western European and North American) planted on European soil and the third pillar (North American only) on the North American continent. The primary purpose, deterrence of the Soviet Union, was the same on both sides of the Atlantic, and the two security enterprises were complementary and mutually reinforcing. In practical terms, however, the European side was multilateral, whereas the North American side was bilateral.

Given subsequent developments, it might be worth emphasizing again that it was not assumed in Ottawa at the beginning that NATO would necessarily entail significant increases in Canadian military expenditures. American military capacity, once firmly committed to the defence of Western Europe, was expected to do the lion's share of the job because ultimately it rested on nuclear weaponry. The flaws of this premise were soon revealed, however, by the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. The Americans still had overwhelming nuclear superiority, but the destructive power of atomic weapons was far too devastating for them to be used in the service of limited objectives or, some might argue, *any* objective. The war in Korea was a limited war. In such circumstances, nuclear weapons were beyond the pale, and conventional deployments could not be avoided (a reality that had started to worry professional defence planners in Washington and elsewhere much earlier). Partial rearmament of the Western powers thus began in earnest in the autumn of 1950, not in the spring of 1949. Hence, while NATO provided the auspices and framework for the consignment of Canadian army and air force contingents to Europe in the early 1950s, it did not itself trigger the initiative. That came instead from an unsettling display of Cold War fisticuffs in another theatre far away.

Recognition that the active use of nuclear weapons, as opposed to their deployment for deterrent purposes only, was an option of last resort, and even then only in the most extreme circumstances, was soon reinforced by growth of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, along with its long-range bomber fleet. Within a decade, John Foster Dulles's doctrine of massive retaliation would be consigned to the scrap heap, and the doctrine of graduated deterrence would come and go, to be replaced in the United States and NATO by the doctrine of flexible response, arguably the doctrine that the Soviets themselves had followed from the beginning.

In summary, the primary factors and considerations underlying Canadian policy in the initial period of NATO's development were the following. First, all of the original members of the alliance agreed that they faced the same overriding threat to their security, that the threat was extremely serious, and that the stakes at issue went to the core of their most vital interests. This perception was accompanied by the conviction

that the underlying conflict between East and West could not be de-escalated, at least for the time being, by political, diplomatic, or otherwise peaceful means. Any security that could be found, therefore, would ultimately depend on the mobilization of military instruments sufficient to counter those at the disposal of the Soviet Union. As Lord Ismay, a future NATO secretary-general (1952–57), famously observed in 1949, the purpose of the alliance was “to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.” Everything else was secondary.

Second, Canada, along with some of the other powers, had a further interest in promoting within the alliance a genuinely multilateral approach to decision making. The purpose was partly cosmetic: a visibly multilateral way of proceeding would preserve the dignity of the smaller players and help to legitimize NATO and its enterprises in the minds of their constituent populations. It was also practical. Multilateral decision-making procedures would give the smaller players better chances of having impacts on policy development and thereby help to level, however moderately, the distribution of influence among the alliance’s members. This predilection was not peculiar to the NATO case. It could also be discerned in Canadian behaviour elsewhere. Some analysts concluded in later years that multilateralism had become a fundamental Canadian foreign-policy value, and until recently this perception infused much of the rhetoric in Canada on foreign affairs. To the extent that many of Canada’s most influential foreign service professionals were persuaded that rule-ordered environments were more conducive to the peaceful conduct of international politics than a non-stop Hobbesian free-for-all, the thought might hold a grain of truth. In its essentials, however, multilateralism is not an end in itself but a means, a technique, an often but not always advantageous way of doing things. It was an important and natural preference for a smaller power that had good reason to be wary of how great powers, even if they were close allies, were inclined to operate. It was thus a significant, if ancillary, consideration.

Third, Canada’s position in the international hierarchy was abnormally elevated in the early postwar period. As noted earlier, some analysts ranked Canada fourth in the world, after the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom. It had deployed impressive

military and economic resources during the Second World War. Its homeland had emerged unscathed by the hostilities and with a substantially enlarged industrial base. With these factors in mind, Canadian officials thought it reasonable to claim the status of a middle power. Elsewhere, in contrast, the traditional powerhouses of Europe and Asia were in disarray and, in some cases, discredited. Canada had moved up, and they had moved down, the ladder. When capacities are redistributed in this fashion, even if the redistribution is temporary, aspirations of the newly promoted players are raised at home. So are expectations, and often demands, consigned to them by their counterparts abroad. Through such processes, enhanced capabilities lead to expanded roles.

Fourth, in the security field, but not only there, the international actors that really counted in the early years of the postwar period were the traditional ones: the governments of legally sovereign states. The presumed threat to the security of the NATO powers was state driven. So were the defences that had to be mounted against it. Even the measures envisaged in Article 2, which depended on engaged non-military themes of political, economic, and social community, had to be germinated and reinforced by state-led initiatives, or so it was assumed. Keeping at bay the threat of yet another world war was assumed to be a paramount undertaking, and no one thought that its pursuit should be, or would be, significantly distracted by intrusions from non-state actors.

Fifth, in the NATO context, the Ottawa interpretation of the allied interest led to a preference for a narrow membership base, a position contrary to the one that Canadian representatives had envisaged for the United Nations. NATO would work more reliably if it were a coalition not just of the willing but also of the like and like-minded. At the pointy end, the security threat was military, but in broader terms it was perceived to be civilizational. It would be harder to secure a determined alliance response to it if the interests and political habits of the allies themselves were too diverse. This was collective defence, not collective security. The practitioners needed to think, speak, and act, both at home and abroad, with as much unity of premise and practice as they could respectively muster.

Geopolitical Changes in the Decades after NATO's Founding and Challenges that They Have Posed

Obviously, the central component of these circumstances, and the Canadian operational preferences that went with them, was the Soviet threat. Its persistence until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 ensured a certain continuity of commitment to the NATO enterprise, particularly in its first decade or so. The outbreak of the Korean War, however, gave the real spur to rearmament. It also triggered the further development of NATO's institutional apparatus, which included *inter alia* not merely the consignment of North American military forces to European soil but also creation of an integrated command structure; investment in military communications, air bases, and other infrastructural requirements; acceptance of the need for a forward defence strategy; inclusion, for strategic reasons, of Greece and Turkey in the alliance in 1952; and incorporation, after some false starts involving other options, of West Germany into NATO. Apart from being essential to the effective performance of the underlying military task, these and similar initiatives thickened institutionalization of the alliance itself.

Not all of the efforts were resoundingly successful, however, particularly in relation to Article 2. Rhetorical support was frequently evident in NATO pronouncements, and in 1956 a three-member Committee on Non-Military Cooperation, chaired by Lester Pearson and including Halvard Lange of Norway and Gaetano Martino of Italy, was established to make practical recommendations. But the resulting report was essentially an exhortation in support of greater member consultation on Article 2-related issues. In the end, it had little real impact.

Ottawa was occasionally disturbed, too, by the cool reception given to its view that North American defence arrangements ought to be regarded as part and parcel of the NATO enterprise. Still, the general thrust of NATO's development, and that of alliance policy, was pretty much in line with Canadian preferences. The acceptance of tactical nuclear weapons for the Canadian Forces under the rubric of graduated deterrence and flexible response caused a political stir in Canada in the early 1960s and arguably contributed to the collapse of the Diefenbaker government, though this might have been due more to the prime minister's

indecisiveness when the weapons were due for delivery than to a quarrel over NATO strategic doctrine itself.

Starting in the same decade, however, cracks in the Canadian consensus on NATO began to surface with increasing frequency. The nuclear weapons controversy at home was a harbinger of this process, and the concerns of critics were compounded by the Cuban Missile Crisis and the close call that it obviously represented. External observers of skeptical disposition, particularly those with nationalist inclinations, began to argue that NATO was a US-dominated enterprise with an excessively bellicose US leadership. In this circumstance, Canada would do well to cultivate a greater measure of independence, a position soon buttressed by the experience of the Vietnam War. Professional foreign service officers and defence planners on the inside in Ottawa thought that they were keeping their eyes on the ball, the Soviet threat, and that they might pride themselves, from day to day, in exercising small bits of influence here and there. But critics on the outside wondered whether the alliance might actually be making a dangerously nuclearized world more hazardous still. And, if Canadian representatives did acquire influence in NATO's offices from the payment of Canada's dues, these results were hard to see and harder to argue that they amounted to much in creating a more peaceful world.

By the late 1960s, some of this skepticism could be found even in the highest offices of government, with Prime Minister Trudeau and some of the younger members of his cabinet wondering whether the foreign and defence policy communities had fallen victim to habit and inertia. Surely, there were more constructive ways of dealing with the Soviet Union. Debates and policy reviews ensued. So, in due course, did cut-backs to the Canadian units assigned to the European theatre.

These developments can best be regarded as manifestations of a growing view that East-West relations, while sometimes unnerving in peripheral theatres, were basically stable in the European heartland. Accordingly, the Canadian contribution there began to appear less essential than in the early years, when it strengthened confidence in Europe, France excepted, that the North American powers were fully committed to European defence, confidence strengthened by the knowledge that some Canadian and American units on the ground were