

## **Interoperability/Integration – Blessing or Curse?**

*An examination of the potentially divergent implications of interoperability and integration as they relate to Canada's commitment to both national and continental security.*

By Acting Sub Lieutenant Melanie Graham  
Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt  
Maritime Forces Pacific

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The Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) launched a public consultation this year (2003) in which Canadians were invited to participate in a dialogue to review Canadian foreign policy<sup>1</sup>. A similar initiative was implemented last year by the Department of National Defence (DND) to re-address Canadian defence policy<sup>2</sup>. There is a subtle but significant philosophical concern associated with these reviews as they apply to defining future Canadian defence capabilities and responsibilities for national and continental security. The concern is two fold. It lies, first, in confusing, or failing to distinguish between, the potentially divergent security implications of interoperability and of integration as they apply to Canada's relationship with her long time ally, neighbour and continental defence partner, the United States. The second and greater issue, however, is the ongoing cultivation of Canada/US interoperability, as demonstrated by the Canadian Navy, in isolation from definitive and proactive Canadian political leadership. Operational interoperability in the political vacuum of an ill defined or indifferently supported foreign or defence policy may very well facilitate the beginning of a politically destabilizing integration of Canadian defence resources with those of the United States. This same interoperability, however, extended and cultivated throughout the Canadian Forces (CF), and supported and defined by comprehensive and proactive foreign and

defence policies, could very well help to counter a real or perceived move towards integration and enhance national and continental security.

The focus in this analysis of the security implications of integration and interoperability is philosophical rather than strategic or capability based. As such, it requires a clear identification and understanding of multiple issues. These include: distinctive definitions of “interoperability” and “integration”; identification of contemporary threats to security; a comparison of the Canadian and American foreign and defence policies; and an exploration of the relationship between integration and interoperability as illustrated by NORAD, NATO and the UN.

Discussions of interoperability are frequently interspersed with the term integration with the inference that they are one and the same. There are critical differences, however, depending on context and application.

Interoperability, according to the Canadian Oxford Dictionary, is a noun that relates to the adjective interoperable, or “able to operate in conjunction”<sup>3</sup>. It describes the ability of distinct and autonomous parts to work together.

The standard NATO definition holds that “interoperability is the ability of systems, units or forces to provide services to and accept services from other systems, units or forces and to use the services so exchanged to enable them to operate effectively together.”<sup>4</sup> The application of this term within a specific context, such as operational, functional, political, economic or cultural, does not significantly alter its interpretation. Use of the expression interoperability,

however, can be qualified with adjectives such as *high* or *marginal*, indicating the extent to which the capability is manifested.

Integration<sup>5</sup> is also a noun referring to “1 the act or an instance of integrating. 2 the intermixing of persons previously segregated.” The verb, integrate, means “1 a to combine (parts) into a whole. b complete (an imperfect thing) by the addition of parts. 2 bring in or come into equal participation in or membership of society, a school etc.” Integration simply means combining separate parts to create a new and unique entity distinct from the original component parts. This suggests that when combining things of significantly disparate size the smaller parts tend to be added to complete or enhance the larger. An integration of individual parts for the establishment of a separate, and unique entity tends to require a degree of equality among the combining parts. The interpretation of integration can be influenced not only by qualifiers such as *comprehensive* or *limited* but also by a contextual frame of reference such as operational, functional, political, economic or cultural as well as a durational qualifier. Is the integration to be permanent, limited to a finite time frame, or is it to be task specific?

Both terms refer to a bringing together of individual parts. Interoperability describes the capability of the parts to function together without requiring any blending or joining of the parts. Integration refers to a blending or joining of separate parts to produce a subsequent single entity without any requisite enhanced ability to function well together. When the parts to be integrated are unequal, there is no balanced blending of the two to produce a unique entity. The lesser part tends, instead, to disappear or be absorbed into the larger, which will retain its essential original identity, for the most part, but may be enhanced by the addition of the lesser. It is interesting to

consider that while interoperability does not require a joining or blending of parts, it could precipitate integration by reducing functional barriers between the parts.

A simplistic application of these terms to Canada/US military relations suggests that, on the basis of their disparity in size, integration would resemble absorption rather than a joining of equals.

In the course of any integration the question of leadership or control is certain to arise. In an operational or task specific integration the leadership or command function will be finite. In the case of a general integration, however, the time frame is open ended. How readily can the framework and structure of leadership or command for a standing integration, once determined and implemented, be subsequently removed or changed? In the case of an asymmetric integration or absorption, how likely is the lesser of the participants to have an influential voice in deciding or changing the leadership or command?

Interoperability has already been well established at the operational level by the Canadian and American navies. Task Force 151 is the most recent example of the unique Canadian interoperability with the USN that began in and around the Persian Gulf, with Operation FRICTION, (August 2, 1990 - February 1991), where “Canadian naval and air components had considerable success in establishing effective interoperability “up” to the forces of the United States and “down” to those of other coalition members.”<sup>6</sup> The cultivation of this two-way, or “gateway” interoperability is also reflected in the recent selection of a Canadian naval officer, Commodore Roger Girouard, to command Task Force 151, with up to 20 allied warships in the

Persian Gulf. This fleet includes US, French, Italian, Dutch, and Greek vessels and has an expanded geographical area of responsibility that represents a substantial increase over that exercised by previous Canadian-led coalition task forces.<sup>7</sup>

It is important at this point to review contemporary security threats, in terms of their nature, possible severity and probable duration, and to compare the Canadian and US foreign and defence policies in response to these threats.

The political face of the world has changed dramatically in the past century and with it perceptions of threats to national security. Traditional conflicts have eased considerably within the core of a growing community of developed and predominantly democratic nation states. Interstate conflicts continue, however, such as those between India and Pakistan, in South and Southeast Asia, between various states in the Middle East, and in Africa. The conflict in Iraq has served as a good indicator of how easily regional conflicts can aggravate interstate tensions and undermine global stability.

Agencies of collective and collaborative state or corporate action, such as the UN, NATO, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and multinational corporations have increased dramatically in number and influence. International political organisations, however, such as the UN and NATO, have yet to evolve sufficient authority, credibility or power in the form of autonomous mechanisms of political, military, or economic intervention, to adequately fulfill their various peace and security mandates. Their systemic shortcomings can so delay or belabour decisive and responsive decision-making, in the event of a regional or international

crisis, that a nation with military capabilities like those of the US, in accordance with national foreign and defence policies, may feel no choice but to initiate military action unilaterally, as illustrated this year in Iraq. Conversely, a regional conflict may not have sufficient economic or political significance to the major players in the global community to merit a prompt international response, and intervention could be delayed until it is too late and too little to avert a tragedy such as the one that befell Rwanda in 1994<sup>8</sup> or the one that is currently emerging in the Congo.

The alignment of international players on the security stage has evolved from multi-polar through bi-polar to a new kind of hybrid and highly asymmetric bipolarity. Today we have a core coalition of relatively stable nations able and prepared to undertake significant collective and collaborative military or economic intervention to ensure the perceived security of their predominantly democratic and economically developed global community. The other side of this new global bi-polarity, by way of contrast, can be elusive and unpredictable and presents a variety of faces. The sources of human conflict, however, remain tied to the traditional struggle for survival. Poverty, ignorance, and environmental crises, as well as regional or globalized competition for dwindling resources, have made the struggle for survival within the marginalized sectors of the world extremely volatile and incidents of state sanctioned conflict have become horrific in their brutality (Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia, Kuwait).<sup>9</sup>

Perceptions of the requirements for survival have expanded to include energy resources, currency manipulation, access to and control of information, and ethnic or ideological predominance. The faceless individuals, or groups that may be representative of religious,

political or environmental extremist organisations, have become the primary, and asymmetric threat to modern survival. This new enemy may lack significant traditional military resources, but can be unpredictable and uncompromising in nature. Their forces are able to make good use of sophisticated but commonplace tools of modern communications and have ready access to lethal and portable weapons of mass destruction that include individually transported nuclear, biological or chemical devices. Threats to national or global security can also result from the socially and economically destabilizing impact of massive population movements as a result of environmental degradation or civil war. These new faces of the “enemy” are symptomatic of a growing economic disparity in the face of intensified competition for dwindling resources. They represent very real threats to national and continental security that are not likely to disappear in the near future. They are, in fact, far more likely to increase.

The growing scarcity of natural resources puts Canada at particular risk. Our nation is under populated in relative terms, yet rich in resources, from fresh water to energy, minerals, lumber and produce. Can existing bilateral and multilateral security arrangements ensure not just continental security but continued Canadian control of domestic resources when global demand intensifies?

Canada is a maritime nation with a “Medium Global Force Projection Navy”<sup>10</sup>, sharing a continental “island” with the United States, the last remaining “super power” and one possessed of a “Major Global Force Projection Navy”<sup>11</sup>. The events of September 11, 2001 dramatically demonstrate the fact that national and continental security can no longer be readily found, either in a collaborative coalition of states or in the geographic isolation of North America. Canada,

furthermore, can no longer count on proximity to the U.S. for security, or assume moral exemption from the terrorism that destroyed the World Trade Centre. The time is long overdue to re-evaluate our responsibilities in this continental partnership, to redefine our role in this relationship, where, more than anywhere else, Canada is likely to find the answer to both domestic and continental security.

Canada and the United States are both members of the community of developed, nations. Through participation in a variety of international economic organisations such as the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund and membership in international political organizations such as the United Nations and NATO both countries participate in a global network of collective economic, ideological and territorial security. Canada and the U.S. are similar in ideologies, historical development and values. There are differences, however, both in size, military and economic capability, and in aspects of the strategic cultures that inform their defence and foreign policies. The contrast in economic and military capabilities is starkly self-evident. A brief comparison of American and Canadian strategic cultures and subsequent foreign and defence policies will facilitate an understanding of the security implications of interoperability and integration within both the framework of this bilateral relationship and the multilateral international dynamic.

Lt Miriam Becker, USN, wrote a paper in 1994 entitled “Strategic Culture and Ballistic Missile Defence” where she laid out a reasonable summary of the US strategic culture that was informed by Ken Booth’s concise description of strategic cultures.<sup>12</sup> The concept, according to Ken Booth, “refers to a nation’s traditions, values, attitudes, patterns of behaviour, habits, symbols,

achievements and particular ways of adapting to the environment and solving problems with respect to the threat or use of force.”<sup>13</sup> In her article, Lt Becker summarized five factors as relevant to the development of US strategic culture. “(1) continental insulation; (2) the remoteness of serious security dangers, owing in part to the military weakness of immediate neighbours; (3) the experience of taming a frontier of continental proportions; (4) enduring fundamentalist religious beliefs; and (5) a national substructure of immigrants.”<sup>14</sup> Becker contends that immigrants escaping repression, determined to build a new and better life, without political, social or religious constraints, in a vast and promising but dangerous frontier built the United States. Their history is one of frequent struggle not only with hostile indigenous cultures and conditions but also against the perceived demands and constraints imposed on them by Great Britain. Fundamentalist religious beliefs inspired a missionary approach to the conquest of hostile indigenous cultures by “conversion” and integration. Military capability evolved from a decentralized and weak capacity for self-defence that sought protection, instead, through retribution or retaliation against violence already committed.<sup>15</sup> This last, when analysed as a part of the cultural profile that informs the U.S. reaction to threat, helps to clarify their immediate and profound response to the events of September 11, 2001.

No equivalent reference was found for Canada, but a review of the US strategic culture in the context of Canadian history indicates that though there are many similarities, such as colonial origins and continental insulation/isolation, there are significant differences. In the war of 1812, when the American colonies fought to extend their hard won political freedom of 1776 to all of North America, Canadians resisted independence, choosing, instead, to remain tied to Great Britain, while the last of the Empire Loyalists fled to Canada.

Canada never experienced a fierce and defining battle for political freedom, or the further annealing and identity refining influence of a civil war, but was content to remain a colony and counted on Great Britain to provide military aid on an as needed basis. Even after Confederation, in 1867, Canada continued to rely on the military and political leadership of the British Empire right through the First World War. It wasn't until the Second World War that Canada shifted focus to the U.S. for patronage when Britain turned her attention away from her empire to focus on survival and recovery at home. This legacy of dependency does much to explain the consistent reluctance of the Canadian government to independent, definitive, substantive and proactive decision-making at the international level.

Canada is possessed of the longest national coastline in the world and shares the longest undefended border with the last remaining superpower. We began informal cooperative continental defence relations with the United States towards the end of the First World War, and transformed them into a formal defence relationship in the summer of 1940 with the signing of the Ogdensburg Agreement and the establishment of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD). Today Canada and the US share more than 80 treaty-level defence agreements, 150 bilateral fora, and 250 Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's).<sup>16</sup> It would appear, at first glance, that the two countries are so much alike and share so many linkages that military integration is inevitable. A comparison of the foreign, defence and security policies of both nations, however, reveals a few fundamental differences.

Foreign policy "can be characterized as the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations."<sup>17</sup> Defence policy refers to a

nation's proposed course or principle of action for the use of military resources to defend against or resist attack.<sup>18</sup> It is important to bear in mind that a nation may determine that the best defence against a perceived potential threat may be pre-emptive or preventive in nature and that that nation may, in its turn, be perceived as a threat.

Canada currently operates on the basis of the Canadian Foreign Policy Review of 1995. In this document Canada defines its international role as one of political and economic leadership within a cooperative coalition of developed nations. This document also takes a moral high ground, so to speak, describing Canada as a multicultural nation, free from a history of colonialism, a champion of constructive multilateralism and an effective international mediator in an increasingly globalized world. The document stresses Canada's commitment to remain actively involved in the world and identifies three interrelated key objectives.

- The promotion of prosperity and employment;
- The protection of our security, within a stable global framework; and
- The projection of Canadian values and culture.<sup>19</sup>

Richard N. Haass, Director of the U.S. Policy Planning Staff, in an address to the Foreign Policy Association on 22 April 2002, stated that the "principle aim of American foreign policy is to integrate other countries and organisations into arrangements that will sustain a world consistent with US interests and values, and thereby promote peace, prosperity, and justice as widely as possible."<sup>20</sup>

There are similarities in terms of a desire for peace, prosperity and security and a belief that many share the national values and interests of each nation. There is an important difference,

however, in how each policy seeks to achieve its objectives. Canada alludes to a plan to passively project its values and culture to attract those who might be interested, while the U.S. plans to proactively and overtly integrate or absorb countries and organisations into arrangements that will support U.S. interests.

Canadian Defence Policy has yet to benefit from the review conducted last year and continues to rely on the Defence White Paper of 1994 for definition. In the introduction to this document the then Minister of Defence, David Collenette, summarized the policy laid out in the White Paper, identifying the primary obligation of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces as the protection of the country and its people. He proclaimed that:

*“a nation not worth defending is a nation not worth preserving.”*<sup>21</sup>

He stated that the policy called for “multi-purpose, combat-capable armed forces able to meet the challenges to Canada's security both at home and abroad”.<sup>22</sup>

In 1999 the Department of National Defence (DND) introduced Strategy 2020<sup>23</sup>, a strategic framework for Defence planning and decision-making. While not a formal defence policy, it was designed as a bridge between the 1994 White Paper and the future defence needs of Canada. The mission described in this strategy was to defend Canada and Canadian interests and values and to contribute to international peace and security. The core of this strategy was the development and maintenance of “modern, task-tailored, and globally deployable combat-

capable forces that can respond quickly to crises at home and abroad, in joint or combined operations.”<sup>24</sup> Has this been accomplished?

One of the eleven attributes considered critical to this strategy is interoperability with the US. Strategy 2020 advocates that Canada strengthen her “ military relationship with the US military to ensure Canadian and US forces are inter-operable and capable of combined operations in key selected areas.”<sup>25</sup> The Canadian Navy has done this.

The United States, on September 17, 2002, issued a 31-page document detailing its new National Security Strategy (NSS). This strategy identifies political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other nations, and respect for human dignity as its primary goals. It goes on to establish that the U.S., in order to accomplish these goals, will:

- “champion aspirations for human dignity;
- strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against us and our friends;
- work with others to diffuse regional conflicts;
- prevent our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends, with weapons of mass destruction;
- ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade;

- expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy;
- develop agendas for cooperative action with other main centres of global power; and
- transform America’s national security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.”<sup>26</sup>

The United States also issued a comprehensive 55-page document in July 2002, detailing the “National Strategy for Homeland Security” for a proposed new federal Department of Homeland Security.<sup>27</sup> This department, implemented on January 23, 2002, was designed to mobilize and organize the nation, at all levels of government, and in association with government agencies, in a coordinated effort to secure the nation against future terrorist attacks. There is, as yet, no comparable Canadian initiative in place.

Canada’s outdated Defence Policy is general, and capability-based but includes recognition of the need to further cultivate defence relationships, not only on a multilateral basis, but especially bilaterally, with the United States. International events of the past two years, on the basis of the existing defence policy, should have prompted an immediate Defence Policy review and redrafting that included an intensive and objective governmental re-evaluation of Canada’s responsibilities with regards to the needs of the North American defence partnership. That review process is, as yet, incomplete.

The United States mobilized promptly and comprehensively in response to 9/11, retaliated where it deemed necessary and recognized that the terrorist threat represents a national and global security challenge that will be with us for some time to come.

The difference between the Canadian and U.S. political response to contemporary security threats is more than just policy based. Immediately after September 11, 2001, the human response in both countries was overwhelming. Militarily, Canada was quick to do all that it could in support of and in cooperation with U.S. efforts. Major General Eric Findley, Director of Combat Operations, and Captain (N) Mike Jellinek, both Canadian NORAD officers, were in key decision-making positions. There was no predetermined plan available for this contingency, so they devised and implemented a coordinated and rapid military and civilian response including the establishment of combat air patrols against potential further attacks.<sup>28</sup> Since the events of September 11, 2001 the government of the United States has moved swiftly to develop and implement a coordinated strategy of defence and security that includes the establishment of the new Department of Homeland Security. The current Canadian government, however, appears to have pulled back to a position of hesitation or indifference. There has been some tightening of border procedures and regulations, a readdressing of immigration policies, and a marginal increase in defence spending, but above and beyond that there seems to be an assumption that either the threat has passed or it will never touch Canada. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it's assumed the U.S. would never allow the threat to touch Canada. The Canadian government, in short, appears to perceive no pressing need to prepare, militarily, to face these emerging threats to national, continental or global security. It is this apparent

indifference that could lead to a perception of military, and possibly political, integration with the United States.

If Canada and the U.S. are so similar, how harmful can military integration be? Operational military integration is a useful solution to the rapid technological, doctrinal and organizational changes that are affecting the defence capabilities of all nations. Described as a Revolution in Military Affairs<sup>29</sup>, these changes demand a dramatic increase in military expenditures and defence research and development that challenge even the United States. The Canadian Forces, like those of the United States, Great Britain, Australia and the member states of the European Union, have recognized a growing need to be capable of operating in joint and combined multilateral operations. This sort of operational integration, however, is task or time specific with a finite designation of command and control for the operation. A comprehensive military integration would ultimately involve the establishment of a formal and permanent command structure, not unlike the one currently employed at NORAD. There are two positions of leadership in NORAD, but the Commander in Chief is an American officer and a Canadian is the Deputy Commander in Chief. Given that the United States provides 90% of the funding for this bilateral operation this arrangement is not unreasonable.

NORAD, for the most part, has proven an effective, integrated, bi-national organisation, but the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 revealed a potential for a blurring or scrambling of command authority. The Canadian cabinet was slow and reluctant to approve any military response to the crisis. The Canadian Forces subsequently mobilized without cabinet sanction. The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) put to sea to shadow Soviet subs in the Atlantic and the Royal Canadian

Air Force (RCAF) went on alert. This incident represents, not only a deteriorating relationship between Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, and President John F. Kennedy, but also a breakdown in relations between the prime minister and the Canadian military - possibly the “single greatest breach of proper civil-military relations in Canadian history.”<sup>30</sup> This incident was also a demonstration of the increasingly close relationship between the RCN and the RCAF and their corresponding services in the U.S.

Canadian involvement in NATO and the United Nations is sometimes referred to as a form of integration, but there are two distinctions that need to be made when comparing integrated participation in these international governmental organisations with partnership in NORAD. NATO and the UN are multilateral organisations that collectively agree upon, and then implement, time or task specific, integrated operations in response to a perceived crisis, with an appointed command team. As multilateral organisations, extensive and multiple input informs decision-making, usually in response to identified security threats, and determines subsequent approved collective action. NORAD is a standing, bilateral agreement between Canada and the United States that is renewed, with occasional modification, every five years. The mandate of NORAD is preventive more than responsive with a primary mission to monitor and protect North American aerospace on an ongoing basis. This does not, however, preclude a capacity to respond effectively to a perceived threat. As a standing bilateral agreement there are only two voices involved in deliberations, one far more powerful than the other. As a standing and ongoing integrated operation with a primarily preventive mandate, NORAD could also be regarded as open ended in duration, subject to a flexible interpretation of threat perception and yet requiring a capability for rapid military response.

Task Force 151, the naval task force currently operating in the Arabian Sea, stands as a contemporary demonstration not only of the close working relationship between the Canadian Navy and the USN, but as a prime example of interoperability in an integrated multilateral operation. As the UN wrestled with the crisis in Iraq earlier this year the Canadian government was slow to take a definitive stand on the build up of a U.S.-led “coalition of the willing” and the establishment of naval forces in the north of the Persian Gulf. In the meantime, the interdiction fleet of the pre-existing Operation Apollo (Canada) or Enduring Freedom (United States), commanded by a Canadian and including Canadian vessels, continued to patrol nearby in the Gulf of Oman. The Canadian perception was of involvement, while the U.S. perception was of betrayal by a long-standing partner. Canadian vessels, while awaiting a decision on possible changes to their mission, maintained optimal interoperability and communication with the U.S. Battle Carrier Group off Iraq. In the event of a crisis, with an indecisive government, is there not a reasonable possibility that professionalism, a close and long standing Canada/US working naval relationship and a high degree of interoperability might have lead to a repeat of the breakdown in civil/military relations evident in the Cuban Missile crisis?

Military integration with the United States, for Canada, would mean eventual absorption and a loss of command and control of our own forces. While there would be the traditional and apparently cost effective military benefits to resting under the defence umbrella of a super power in terms of national, continental and international security, there would also be drawbacks. The most obvious would be the establishment of one large continental target, with less and less reason to distinguish, politically between Canada and the US, and the disappearance of Canadian

sovereignty. The disruption to the international balance of powers, however, could likely be more profound in the long run. The North American continent could come to be perceived by much of the world, democratic, or representative of the growing community of marginalized extremists, as a hyper power, with access to natural, and socio-economic resources that would dwarf those of any coalition of developed states. This could be regarded as profoundly threatening; a perception based, in part, on the consistent and historical application of the U.S. doctrine of security, originally predicated on containment, but now predicated on integration. Confrontation and the potential for conflict, whether diplomatic, economic or military, generally originate from a perception of threat.

The United States, though expressing no desire for a political integration with Canada since the War of 1812, has long expressed an interest in stronger economic ties that is in keeping with its policy of security through integration. American Ambassador Paul Cellucci, in a recent speech to politicians and business leaders in Fort St. John, B.C., 28 March 2003, called for a “merger of Canadian and American energy markets and transmission systems, saying the U.S. wants a completely integrated energy market across the continent.”<sup>31</sup> This is an interesting proposition given that more than half of the energy in Canada is sold to the United States. Militarily, however, would integration be as cost effective a national security solution for the United States as the alternative of a hardened Canada/US border, as well as the installation of a Nuclear Missile Defence system?

There is no move underway currently to integrate Canada with the United States militarily beyond the conduct of integrated operations and arrangements like NORAD. Is it possible,

however, that there is a growing perception of a Canadian drift towards integration with the United States? It is disturbing to read of developments in the European Union, the United Nations, and NATO and see so little reference to Canada. Canadian input to discussions in the UN, prior to the U.S. attack on Iraq, carried little, if any, weight. “Canada today has very little influence in world affairs and even less ability to influence other nations’ decisions about our country and its place in the world.”<sup>32</sup>

There is a strong correlation between perceived military power, particularly sea power, and a nation's economic success. Establishing and maintaining healthy foreign markets for domestic products is essential to the economic health of any nation, and is heavily dependent on the collective protection of secure and reliable international shipping lanes. If a nation is to have a credible voice in the development of international trade policies it seems reasonable that it share the collective burden of responsibility for the security of that trade while clearly identifying and ensuring the security of its own ports and coastal waters. This would be particularly true for a coastal nation like Canada. The reality may be difficult to grasp from the landlocked interior, but the majority of Canadian exports are transported by sea. Without the means to participate in global maritime security, with a credible navy, what voice would a nation have in the regulation and development of international maritime trade? We also have a heavy economic dependency on the United States. Close to 90% of Canadian trade heads south every year, either in transit through the United States or to American markets, and almost 50% of that trade goes by sea. This is in marked contrast with the approximately 25% of U.S. exports that make their way into Canadian markets. What will hardened borders do to Canadian access to U.S. ports?

Collective protection of the sea-lanes of commerce and communication, by a multilateral coalition of like-minded powers, is critical both to shipping and to equitable trade practices. At the close of the Second World War Canada was possessed of the third largest navy in the world with over 470 ships, and the fourth largest merchant marine with over 170 ocean-going vessels under the Canadian flag.<sup>33</sup> Today Canada has an ocean-going fleet of 34 naval vessels, twelve of which are better suited to patrolling littoral waters. Canada now ranks thirty-fourth among UN troop contributing countries.<sup>34</sup> The Canadian government continues to perceive Canada as a significant player in the world. Reality suggests otherwise. Canada, though refusing to participate in the “coalition of the willing” against Iraq, continued to support Operation Apollo. The apparent absence of overt Canadian political support, in spite of ongoing defence cooperation, triggered a range of public responses in the United States that were and continue to be economically damaging. There was, for example, this response to Canadian bids on eBay “At the present time we will not honour bids from Canada, Mexico, France, Germany or any other country that does not support the United States in our efforts to rid the world of Saddam Hussein.”<sup>35</sup> There was also a report of Canadian companies being shut out of the bidding for lucrative rebuilding contracts in Iraq.<sup>36</sup> On Tuesday, 18 March 2003, when the United States raised its terror alert level, border crossings backed up for hours. The Ontario government estimated that a one-hour delay at the border held up approximately \$54 million in goods.<sup>37</sup> There is also a growing U.S. sentiment that Canada freeloads on American defence. A well-placed American commentator observed, “if it weren’t for the United States protecting North America, Canada would be sitting out there in the open.”<sup>38</sup>

The “Canadian Forces have all but lost the capacity to undertake operations for a sustained period.”<sup>39</sup> As a nation we are almost undefended at a time when threats to national and global security are increasing. The Canadian Navy is extremely capable, but insufficient to meet coalition obligations and patrol Canadian waters simultaneously. How many Canadian naval vessels are even capable of patrolling our own Arctic waters? Global warming is increasing the appeal of the Arctic as both a northwest passage and a potentially rich source of energy resources. The United States will not wait. The ambivalence of the Canadian government to its defence responsibilities, both to Canadians and to Canada’s continental defence partner creates an international impression of a North American defence integration and a U.S. perception of threat. American defence policy dictates an immediate threat response to either secure or harden the Canada/US border or assume the defence of the Canadian coastline. The first would be economically devastating and the second would eliminate any semblance of Canadian sovereignty, over our coastal waters or over our marine resources. Given the pending scarcity of natural resources and current American interest in integrated resource management, how likely is it that a US assumption of Canadian defence responsibilities would be entirely benevolent?

Canadian military interoperability, such as that which has already been so well established between the Canadian Navy and the USN, without a definitive Canadian foreign or defence policy or strong political leadership, could significantly contribute to a global perception of the integration of Canadian forces with those of the U.S. Could this same operational capability, however, defined and focused by proactive political leadership and articulated in revitalized Canadian foreign and defence policies, be cultivated and extended throughout the land and air

elements of the Canadian Forces in a way that would substantially benefit continental security while enhancing Canadian sovereignty?

The member states of the European Union (EU), like Canada and the United States, are participants in multilateral organisations like the UN and NATO, and share a long-standing commitment to maintaining global and national security through multilateral and collaborative economic or military interventions. Prior to the events of September 11, 2001, the EU and the United States, however, had divergent priorities in their perceptions of threats to security. The United States was focused on emerging and predominantly military threats to security while Europe was more concerned with the global challenges to security like climate change, migration, poverty, infectious disease control and trafficking in women and children.<sup>40</sup> Europe was also preoccupied with its own evolution and the complexities and birth pains of European integration while the U.S. was focused on political concerns such as tensions in the Middle East, the Americas and Asia.

Today the United States, though recognizing a growing need for multilateral operations, displays a proclivity for unilateral action. Europe, by the very act of economic integration, has demonstrated theoretical confidence in a multilateral approach to threat response and prevention, but appears, from a US perspective, to be slow to agree on the functional capability to put this into practice. The United States, though it recognizes the benefits of multilateral action and the need for interoperability with its allies, sees these as being best accomplished by ensuring the predominance of the U.S. defence industry. The European Union, on the other hand, as a part of establishing economic parity with the United States, is equally vehement about the cultivation of

a strong and autonomous European defence industry. Neither side is prepared to share industrial secrets, however, so the mutual desire for technical interoperability is compromised by defence industry rivalries. This apparent disconnect between the means and the objective may represent a political opportunity for Canada.

The Canadian Navy is not only highly interoperable with the USN; it is capable of gateway interoperability with both the USN and members of allied fleets. If this capability was cultivated throughout the Canadian Forces, land and air as well as sea, particularly in terms of communications and operating procedures, it could be promoted as both a Canadian specialty and a means of defining Canada's military role in UN, NATO and U.S.-led multilateral operations. A commitment to cultivating and sustaining a high degree of CF-wide gateway interoperability with the American forces would require elevated defence spending, including the cultivation of improved interoperability across the CF itself. It could be accomplished, however, within the capability parameters laid out in Strategy 2020, to provide Canada with a "modern, task-tailored, and globally deployable combat-capable forces that can respond quickly to crisis at home and abroad, in joint or combined operations."<sup>41</sup> An overt and economically supported commitment to a specific military capability and purpose would also significantly enhance Canadian credibility as a participant in multilateral and bilateral operations. Led by a comprehensive foreign policy, strongly representative of Canadian values and ideals, interoperability would help to establish clearly the means by which Canada could fulfill her defence responsibilities proactively within the Canada/US partnership. In this way Canada would benefit militarily from proximity to the United States, complement and enhance American defence capabilities, but remain sufficiently distinct to consolidate Canadian sovereignty over

our own coastal waters. Cultivating this Canada/US gateway interoperability would also strengthen Canada's influence and credibility both within the partnership and in the international community. Given the differences between our foreign and defence policies, this could also prove beneficial as a moderating influence on how both governments respond to security threats. The naval capabilities needed to support such an undertaking are well defined in "Leadmark: The Navy's Strategy for 2020"<sup>42</sup> and could be used as a model for the rest of the Canadian Forces. Establishing Canada and the United States as defence partners as opposed to a single, integrated defence position also brings the advantages of diversity to the global balance. Canada can never anticipate developing, let alone sustaining, a military comparable to that of the U.S. What nation could? By cultivating a vital role in the deployment of American forces in multilateral operations, however, Canada increases her influence both in terms of how that overwhelming force is deployed and in defining her role in that deployment while strengthening continental security through a global presentation of political diversity with a unity of purpose.

The cultivation of Canada/US military interoperability, supported and guided by proactive and definitive foreign and defence policies, could significantly enhance continental and national security and positively strengthen relations with the US while reinforcing Canadian sovereignty.

The Canadian Navy has demonstrated the benefits of Canada/US interoperability most effectively in Operation Apollo. Gateway interoperability in particular, as an integral part of strong Canadian foreign and defence policies could afford Canada a cost effective means to a stronger military and political voice in the global community and a clearer American and international perception of the nature and extent of Canadian participation in multilateral and bilateral exercises and operations. The Canadian Navy has set an achievable standard on which a

proactive and visionary Canadian government could build the development of service-wide Canada/US interoperability. The establishment of a clear and complementing military relationship with the US could also ensure Canada a stronger voice at international trade and peacekeeping discussions. This would enhance national security, preserve and promote Canadian values and ideals globally and present a stronger sense of an asymmetric but nonetheless more balanced, bilateral, Canada/US “team” approach to issues affecting national, continental and global security.

Integration, or even the perception of integration could significantly undermine continental and national security and undermine Canada’s influence in bilateral and multilateral decisions affecting her economic, environmental and political security. What, for example, will become of the sovereignty of Canadian coastal waters, if it’s perceived that their defence has been abrogated by Canada and assumed by the US? If Canada does not adequately protect her own coastline, will the defence of these waters eventually be addressed on the basis of U.S. security needs, priorities and policies? If Canada is perceived as vacillating or indeterminate in her own defence, will this come to represent a threat to US security that could see trade dwindle as borders harden, or will she face absorption to facilitate inclusion in the US security umbrella? Integration, perceived or real, could also diminish Canadian political and cultural identity as distinct from the US. This could be perceived, internationally as a threatening evolution of the US to a hyper power while turning the continent into one single target. There would be no moderating influence of distinct and separate nations with diverse socio/political/economic linkages throughout the world. A perception of Canada/US integration, moreover, can and is being achieved through the current governments’ tendency to undervalue the political and

economic benefits of a strong Canadian military while complacently assuming the assurance of security on the basis of geographical and ideological proximity to the United States.

If Canada is to develop foreign and defence policies that adequately address contemporary national, continental and global security challenges, the government must make a commitment to a credible military role in bilateral and multilateral operations. In particular, Canada must re-evaluate and re-commit to the Canada/US defence partnership and take a more proactive and responsible role that is cost effective yet assures her autonomy and a credible voice in the international community. Canada/US military interoperability across the CF, as has been so well demonstrated by the Canadian Navy, has been identified, in Strategy 2020, as an integral part of Canada's future defence capabilities. This interoperability, however, without proactive political support, may reinforce a perceived drift towards integration that is more representative of an abrogation of our government's responsibility, to Canadians, to our American neighbours and partners, and to international multilateral efforts against terrorism as well as in aid of peace.

#### **Endnotes:**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.foreign-policy-dialogue.ca/en/welcome/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.forces.gc.ca/menu/consult/update/index\\_e.asp](http://www.forces.gc.ca/menu/consult/update/index_e.asp)

- <sup>3</sup> Edited by Katherine Barber, *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, (Oxford University Press Canada 1998) interoperable, interoperability.
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- <sup>5</sup> Barber, *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, integrate, integrated.
- <sup>6</sup> Middlemiss and Stairs, “The Canadian Forces and the Doctrine of Interoperability: The Issues”, p. 21
- <sup>7</sup> Paul Koring and Daniel LeBlanc, *Canadian will run Persian Gulf naval task force*, Globe and Mail Tuesday, February 11 edition, p. A1
- <sup>8</sup> Peter Stoett, *Human and Global Security: An Exploration of Terms*, (University of Toronto Press 1999) p. 30
- <sup>9</sup> Stoett, *Human and Global Security: An Exploration of Terms*, pg 29
- <sup>10</sup> Directorate of Maritime Strategy, *Leadmark: The Navy’s Strategy for 2020*, (NDHQ/Chief of the Maritime Staff, 2001) p. 44
- <sup>11</sup> Directorate of Maritime Strategy, *Leadmark: The Navy’s Strategy for 2020*, p. 44
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- <sup>13</sup> Ibid p.2
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid p.3
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- <sup>22</sup> Ibid
- <sup>23</sup> [http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/strategy2k/s2k06\\_e.asp](http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/strategy2k/s2k06_e.asp)
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid
- <sup>26</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>
- <sup>27</sup> <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/index.jsp>
- <sup>28</sup> [http://www.dnd.ca/site/Newsroom/view\\_news\\_e.asp?id=1004](http://www.dnd.ca/site/Newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=1004)
- <sup>29</sup> Dr. Elinor Sloan, “Canada and the Revolution in Military Affairs: Current Response and Future Opportunities” in John Marteinson (ed) the Canadian Military Journal, (Department of National Defence, Ottawa) Autumn 2000, p.7
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