



CANADIAN GLOBAL AFFAIRS INSTITUTE
INSTITUT CANADIEN DES AFFAIRES MONDIALES

Foreword and Introduction

David Bercuson
July, 2016



2016 POLICY REVIEW SERIES

Foreword and Introduction

By David Bercuson

CGAI Director of Programs and Fellow
July, 2016



CANADIAN GLOBAL AFFAIRS INSTITUTE
INSTITUT CANADIEN DES AFFAIRES MONDIALES

Prepared for the Canadian Global Affairs Institute
1600, 530 – 8th Avenue S.W., Calgary, AB T2P 3S8
www.cgai.ca

©2016 Canadian Global Affairs Institute
ISBN: 978-1-927573-68-6

► Foreword

CANADA'S DEFENCE REVIEW SUBMISSION OF THE CANADIAN GLOBAL AFFAIRS INSTITUTE

The essays that follow have been supported by the RBC Foundation and constitute the official submission of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute (CGAI) to Canada's Defence Policy Review. As in all CGAI publications, each essay, including the introduction, represents the thinking of the author, and not that of CGAI or the RBC Foundation. CGAI has no 'view' on any matter. As a Canada Revenue Agency approved charitable organization, CGAI does not advocate anything, takes no stand on anything, and only provides a platform for the views of persons (usually but not always its fellows and advisory council members) who have intelligent observations about Canadian global affairs and defence policy which we think deserve presentation to the Canadian public. Our one consistent goal is a better informed country that understands Canada's place in the world, its challenges and what policies can help Canada to continue to move forward into a peaceful and prosperous future.

The contributions here have been commissioned with a view to offering advice and suggestions to the government on issues that CGAI believes are most germane to Canadian defence policy. There are essays on the Canadian Army by Lieutenant General Stuart Beare (ret'd), on the Royal Canadian Navy by Captain (N) Serge Bertrand (ret'd), the Royal Canadian Air Force by Colonel Alan Stephenson (ret'd), Special Forces by Lieutenant General D. Michael Day (ret'd), and Reserves by Colonel George Petrolekas. There are also contributions on procurement (Dr. David Perry, CGAI senior analyst), cyber challenges (John Adams, former head of Communications Security Establishment (CSE), Canada and NATO (Julian Lindley-French, Vice-President, Atlantic Treaty Association), space policy and NORAD (Major Andrew Godefroy), realistic peace support options for Canada (Dr. Sarah Jane Meharg, Adjunct Professor at Royal Military College of Canada), the need for Canada to maintain hard power and soft power options (Dr. Stephen Saideman, Paterson Chair in International Affairs, Carleton University), security challenges in Asia/Pacific (former Ambassador Marius Grinius) and jointness (Major General Doug Dempster (ret'd)).

In each case authors were asked to make policy suggestions and not recommendations for specific platforms, though at times it is hard to separate the two. And they were asked to consider the budget implications of their suggestions. To a large extent, they have met our goals. The purpose of this introduction, then, is to offer an overall view of the defence challenges Canada faces.

David J. Bercuson
Director of Programs
Canadian Global Affairs Institute



INTRODUCTION

It has often been declared by scholars and other observers of Canadian defence policy that it consists of three principal aims: first, the defence of Canada itself; second, the defence of North America in conjunction with the United States; third, the maintenance of international order alongside allies and in conjunction with organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the United Nations (UN) or coalitions of the willing, as they are now called. But in fact these principles tell us nothing about the reality of Canadian defence obligations today, nor even the reality of defence obligations that Canada has assumed over the past 70 years since the end of the Second World War, or will assume in the future.

To begin with, the first and second principles are essentially the same. Any external danger to Canada must consist of an external danger to North America as well, and any external danger to North America is a danger to Canada. It is also true that Canada, a state of some 35,000,000 people and the second largest state by area on the face of the earth, is quite incapable of defending itself fully and can play but a marginal role both in its own defence and in the defence of North America. For reasons of national sovereignty Canada must do what it can in both situations – to defend itself and North America – but its efforts will never prove sufficient for either or both tasks in the face of a determined threat. Canada will always rely heavily on the United States for its own defence. Geographic, trade, historical and political realities will almost certainly dictate that the defence of Canada will always be a vital US national interest also.

What purpose, then, do the Canadian Armed Forces serve other than as a trip-wire and a symbol of Canada's willingness to do what it can to defend itself against the very unlikely possibility that a hostile force will ever attempt to penetrate Canadian sovereign territory? Surely the most important practical purpose that the Canadian Armed Forces serve is to aid in the task of deterring potential hostile forces from intrusions against allies or other states which may not formally be allied with Canada but the safety of which is a vital Canadian interest.

One way of thinking about this is to see Canada as one node of an international web of obligations that ties Canada and other democratic, capitalist, and liberal states together with agreements covering all manner of matters from trade treaties to defence obligations. Every international war Canada has fought has been undertaken by Canada because of its close ties to other states with which it shares substantial values and interests. By itself, in Canada, Canadians are as safe as possible in this age of international terrorism, cyber attacks, and other international challenges to world order. Canada is not vulnerable to geopolitical threats from powerful potential rivals. There are no challenges to the international order just over the horizon, let alone at Canada's borders.

Canadians sometimes compare the defence expenditures of Canada and Australia to show how that country, very similar to Canada in many ways, is far more serious and willing to spend far more in defence preparation, even though its population is about a third less. But Australians live in a dangerous part of the world while Canadians stand right under the defence umbrella of the world's most powerful state. If Canadians think of themselves as an integral part of a globe-spanning network that includes allies and trade partners – from Japan to the United Kingdom and from the United States to virtually the tip of South America – they would begin to see the many threats to the global order which may not directly affect Canada, but most certainly affect so many of its partners.



Why does this matter? It matters because dangers to partners have engaged Canada in every overseas war it has fought which shows that, based on Canadian history, it is the 'third' requirement of defence policy, 'the maintenance of international order alongside allies and in conjunction with organizations such as NATO, the UN or coalitions of the willing,' which is at least as important as any other defence issue that Canadians face. This does not mean that Canada's armed forces should not prepare to defend Canada and aid the United States in the defence of the continent. It does mean that the latter two aims are a given but the third aim is the one that ought to guide force structure and development because expeditionary operations will always pose the greatest challenges for Canada. Where to go? How much to get involved? To what purpose? On what conditions? For how long? These are the most difficult questions to deal with because Canada's military engagements are always a matter of choice and are usually mandated in large measure in response to the needs of its partners.

Canada participated in the First World War due to constitutional ties to the Crown which declared itself at war against Germany on 4 August 1914. Canada was a colony with no independent standing among other states. The British Empire was at war and thus Canada was at war. The strong ties many Canadians felt to the Empire drove the Canadian government, led by Prime Minister Robert Borden, to make as significant a contribution as possible to the war, including the dispatch of a four division corps to fight under overall British command. It is axiomatic to point out that the Central Powers posed very little physical danger to Canada. In the Second World War Canada, independent since the proclamation of the Statute of Westminster in 1931, issued its own declaration of war because a large majority of Canadians felt strong ties to Britain and because a Nazi-dominated Europe and specifically the Atlantic Ocean was a threat to Canada's national interests. Again, Canada was not in any direct physical danger in September 1939. In the Korean conflict, which broke out in June 1950 with the invasion of the Republic of Korea by communist North Korea, Canada – grudgingly at first – was coaxed into participation in stages (ending with the dispatch of a brigade group of approximately 8,000 personnel, rotated twice) by Washington, London and the UN. Neither Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent nor Minister of National Defence Brooke Claxton were at all enthusiastic about joining the conflict. But Canada did so to placate important allies even though most Canadians seem to have agreed with the decision. Canada deployed troops to Afghanistan in late 2001 because a strong majority of Canadians thought it was only proper after the terrorist attacks on the United States on 9/11. Canada itself was not attacked. Canada joined the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in 2003 largely because of US pressure after Canada declined to participate in the invasion of Iraq and, further, Canada sent its troops to Kandahar province in 2005 as a member of NATO and to help the United States withdraw American troops from there to send to Iraq.

In each of these cases and in others – the bombing of Serbia in 1999, the air attacks against Libya and ISIL, for example – Canada joined its alliance or coalition partners because of alliance obligations. Thus, Canadians have always fought as a part of a larger alliance or coalition and always will. This is the reason why the real focus of this Defence Policy Review should be on the geopolitical challenges that alliance partners face and how Canada must best prepare its armed forces for expeditionary operations to aid them, as in Eastern Europe where Russian military action and threats such as cyber attacks have already demonstrated the dangers to Canada's NATO allies.

The most important by far of Canada's alliance partners is the United States. Canada has neither the quantity nor the range of military capabilities to offer much to the United States or to

operate to complement US forces abroad except not to be a burden in guarding the sea and air approaches to North America. Thus Canada's role in North American defence must primarily be one of reconnaissance. Canada needs to know, and the United States needs to know, what is in the skies, on the surface of the seas and under them. In doing so, Ottawa needs to deploy assets in the air, at sea and under the sea that are equal to the best assets of any state that would seek to operate in Canada's sovereign space without knowledge and consent. What many Canadians do not understand – but political leaders must – is that Canada will almost never need these assets to 'go to war' with others in defence of its sovereignty, or to draw a line under the sea, on the sea or in the air and destroy whoever crosses that line. Canada needs those assets first to know who is out there and second to meet them at the edge of sovereign territory to assure them that Canada knows they are there and to 'escort' them away. If, in the slim chance some state or hostile force deliberately penetrates Canada's space without consent, and with obvious ill intent, the Canadian Armed Forces must also have the ability to hold them off as long as possible until US allies arrive to come to Canada's aid. Canada is as dependent on the Americans for its defence in the slim possibility of major war in the 21st century as it was on the British in the 19th.



DND

Canada's duty to other allies – in NATO but also to states with which it shares values and interests, such as Japan, the Republic of Korea and Australia – is primarily political because the military is too small to make any significant contribution to the common defence. But 'political' in this sense means presence. One or two Canadian ships in the South and East China Seas will make no military difference in the struggle of the states on the periphery of those seas to hold off China's long-term effort to be the paramount power in the Asia-Pacific region. However a continuous naval presence there, doing port calls, exercising with the navies of friends and allies on a continuing basis, providing a part of the air defence, anti-missile defence or anti-submarine capability for the US Seventh Fleet on an ongoing basis, or engaging in freedom of the seas



voyages in international waters, will be a strong political signal of Canada's support to friends there. Would any Canadian effort of this type adversely affect attempts to keep China open to Canadian trade? It is possible but unlikely. Consider the United States itself which continues to conduct international navigation cruises to within the 12-mile limit of China's new artificial bases in the South China Sea, certainly raising Chinese ire (at least for public consumption), but leaving trade unaffected. The same seems to be the case even between China and Japan, which is building up its Maritime Self-Defense Force in the East China Sea and which holds the Senkaku islands that China claims.

Canada's NATO allies have laid down a target of military spending of 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The United States spends roughly 4% of GDP on defence; Canada is at just over 1% of GDP, the lowest in decades. The previous government agreed to the 2% target but did little to increase defence spending. The current government has not disavowed this aim, but has not moved any further to achieving it than the previous government. And the current government – like the previous government – has put off some \$3 to \$5 billion in capital spending because, quite simply, there is nowhere to spend the money right now.

Measuring a state's resolve to make a meaningful contribution to the common defence by comparing the amount it spends on defence as a percentage of its GDP is problematic. But Canada did commit itself to that goal and the rest of NATO did as well. Britain and France are determined to meet it and have been increasing their defence budgets accordingly, so is Germany. A resurgent and increasingly hostile Russia is reason enough to build up NATO's deterrence. But can Canada actually do it? It won't be easy. Even if Ottawa decides that 2% is a goal it must achieve, or be treated as a freeloader by its allies, a state cannot simply add money and watch a military grow. The entire defence infrastructure would have to be expanded. A much more efficient procurement process would have to be initiated. Key decisions would have to be made as to what capabilities Canada would add or expand, or even cut. None of these tasks are easy to do in a short period of time. In the early 1950s, with defeat looming in Korea and NATO expansion just beginning, Canada basically tripled its defence budget in four years causing immense inflationary pressures in the country and leading to several incidents of gross mismanagement in both the Department of National Defence and the Canadian military.

There is no question that Ottawa will have to increase the Canadian defence budget as long as international relations remain as unsettled as they are. The greatest threat to Canadian allies and to international peace and order is Vladimir Putin's Russia. Canada must be prepared to demonstrate military solidarity with NATO allies in order to do its part to build deterrence. But although Putin's Russia is the greatest threat at the moment, the most serious long-term danger to international order – and to allies in the Indo-Pacific region – is China's blatant violation of international norms in its drive to become the paramount power in that corner of the globe. This is because Russia remains largely a landlocked state with limited ability to project power abroad, a narrow area in which to operate in Central Europe, and massive demographic, infrastructure and economic problems at home. China, on the other hand, is seeking breakthroughs in Central Asia, the Indian Ocean, the East and South China Seas and the Western Pacific. As mentioned, Canada can realistically do little to deter Chinese behaviour, but it can politically support key allies, and trading and investing partners, by deploying more than the miniscule military resources in the region it deploys now.

Closer to home, Canada can play a more significant role in safeguarding the Caribbean against narco-terrorism and human smuggling, responding to natural disasters, and training Caribbean police and security forces. This could be done not only because the Caribbean is of the utmost



importance to the United States but because Canada has substantial mining and investment interests in the basin and many Canadians have strong family ties to the region. Canada cannot do much to accomplish any of these goals with the defence budget as low as it is now.

What Canada should try to do is slowly, over a period of say five years, increase the size of defence spending per GDP to between 1.5% and 1.75% while increasing the international defence profile by engaging in missions of importance and significance to allies and especially to Washington. In the thick of Canada's war in Kandahar province, Canadian defence spending as a percentage of GDP never approached 2%. But with the equivalent of half a brigade there and Canadians fighting and dying to battle the Taliban insurgency, none of Canada's allies – especially the United States – criticized it for spending too little on defence. This should not be taken to mean that Canada should find a war somewhere to offset a failure to increase defence spending. What it does mean is that Canada should be both imaginative and proactive in finding important work to do in the common defence, especially work that will help the United States achieve some of its key objectives. The easiest mission would be to increase the Canadian naval, air surveillance and special forces presence in the Caribbean using the new Arctic Offshore Patrol Ships in winter to supplement the US Navy and Coast Guard (and Canada's single frigate there) to train special forces among small but key allies and to help with surveillance of vast stretches of the Caribbean and the approaches to its passages to the Atlantic. Whatever other missions Canada might select, it must bear in mind that the only ally that really matters in terms of achieving, or not quite achieving, the 2% goal is the United States.

The same principle should govern any peace support operations under UN auspices. Canada should not participate unless it is clear that Canadian forces will be operating alongside well-equipped and well-trained troops, that logistics and medevac needs will be met by military forces at least as efficient as Canadian troops are and that, in case of major kinetic contacts, Canada can call on sufficient air or artillery assets. Above all, Canada's interests must be served by any such mission. Ottawa should concentrate Canadian forces for political effect, and should ensure that any UN chain of command is efficient and battle-ready 24 hours a day.

Canadian military deployments abroad – including missions under UN auspices – should always be carried out to achieve specific Canadian or allied national interests. It is most certainly true that there is a lot of pain and violence in the world and atrocities visited upon the innocent, but Canada must use its military resources in ways that most closely achieve the geopolitical interests of itself and its allies, especially the United States. Canada is connected to some states and regions more than to others and given limited military resources, it must never spread itself too thinly, try to do too much across the spectrum of military operations, or use the military as tokens where tokenism won't count for much.

David J. Bercuson
Director of Programs
Canadian Global Affairs Institute