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Canada and the United States "What Does it Mean to be Good Neighbours?"

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Canada and the United States:
What Does it Mean to be Good Neighbours?

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper argues that although "good neighbourliness" in International Relations is a problematical concept, it nevertheless does retain much utility, especially in respect of relations between Canada and the United States. The concept itself initially took explicit shape during the 1930s, and it applied to U.S. relations with the Latin American republics. Though it never did result in any long-lasting improvement in relations between America and its southern neighbours, and therefore can rightly be adjudged a policy failure, the Good Neighbor Policy (as it was called) did suggest a means of taking the contemporary measure of "good neighbourliness" between Canada and the United States. Thus this paper assumes that great heuristic and policy relevance is to be had by examining the historical record of America's pattern of cooperation (or lack thereof) with neighbours both to the south and the north, and claims that there are certain absolutely essential conditions requiring fulfillment in order for Canada and the U.S. to continue to be considered good neighbours. Some analysts believe that unless the two countries develop a strong "regional identity," good neighbourliness must always remain a will-o'-the wisp, but that is not the argument developed here. Instead, this paper takes a more minimalist view of good neighbourliness, and concludes that the indefeasible obligation that underlies good neighbourliness between Canada and the U.S. is that each looks out for the other's legitimate security interests in North America.

RÉSUMÉ

Selon cette communication, même si le concept de « bon voisinage » dans les relations internationales est problématique, il n'en retient pas moins une grande utilité, particulièrement en rapport avec les relations entre le Canada et les États-Unis. Le concept lui-même a pris forme au cours des années 1930 et il s'appliquait alors aux relations des États-Unis avec les républiques de l'Amérique latine. Bien qu'elle n'ait jamais abouti à une amélioration bien durable des relations entre « l'Amérique » et ses voisins du sud, et qu'on puisse donc à juste titre parler d'échec de ces politiques, la « Good Neighbor Policy » (comme on l'appelait alors) a suggéré un moyen de prendre la mesure du « bon voisinage » actuel entre le Canada et les États-Unis. Donc, cette communication fait l'hypothèse qu'on peut obtenir une grande pertinence en termes d'heuristique et de politiques en examinant le dossier historique du schéma de la coopération (ou de son absence) de « l'Amérique » et ses voisins, au sud comme au nord, et allègue qu'il existe certains conditions absolument essentielles qui doivent être remplies pour qu'on puisse continuer à considérer que le Canada et les États-Unis sont bons voisins. Certains analystes croient que, à moins que les deux pays développent une « identité régionale » forte, le bon voisinage doit toujours rester un feu follet, mais ce n'est pas l'argument qui est développé ici. Cette communication adopte plutôt un point de vue minimaliste du bon voisinage et conclut que l'obligation indéfectible qui sous-tend la relation de bon voisinage entre le Canada et les États-Unis est que chacun des voisins surveille les intérêts légitimes de l'autre en Amérique du Nord.

ON "COOPERATION" AND "GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS" IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The topic I have the privilege of addressing is not one I would have had the pleasure of choosing if left to my own devices, for it is by no means obvious what the requirements of good neighbourly behaviour are as between any members of the international system. About the only thing that can be safely said is that neighbours, in international politics, have not generally been very good to each other, and over the course of history it has been far more common to find them intertwined in strife than locked in any irenic embrace. Still, in recent time the expectation has grown that neighbours should, or at least might, become less combative and more cooperative. Some of them have; therefore, our inquiry into what it means for two such neighbours, Canada and the United States, to be "good" must begin with a few words about cooperation in international relations, for good neighbourliness constitutes a particular kind of cooperation.

As a discipline, international relations (IR) is sometimes considered to be not only a morals-free zone, but also a cooperation-free one. The reasons for the assumption that cooperation is necessarily a scarce commodity are familiar enough, and are often traced to what is (wrongly) called the dominance of "realism" in IR theory.[1] But realism, with its expectation that "anarchy" obliges states everywhere and anywhere to be on the *qui vive* for their security, and hence to practice self-help, is only part of the theoretical picture. Contending bodies of theory, often associated with "liberalism" in one guise or another, provide reason to believe that the realists woefully underestimate the prospects of both cooperation and good neighbourliness in the international system, even *in* the presence of anarchy. States, in this view, possess much "agency." They can, conditions obliging, cooperate very closely, for "anarchy is what states make of it."[2] They not only can cooperate, they can become good neighbours.

Although cooperation may be the genus of which good neighbourliness is the species, the two behavioural dispositions are not identical. Cooperation might seem like a vitamin-rich package, but in fact it can often turn out to be pretty thin gruel. For instance, it can simply represent an agreement to disagree short of war, as was the pattern during the Cold War, when two superpowers, foes by any reckoning and friends by none, could withal manage their rivalry and enmity without making war upon each other.[3] This was the kind of cooperation summed up by Raymond Aron's superpower imagery of "brother-enemies," faced with no alternative but to cooperate for fear of the ineffable harm they would inflict (and absorb) if they did not.[4] Even well before the Cold War, this kind of international cooperation was showing up in strange settings, such as on the Western Front at various stages of the First World War, when a "live-and-let live" system of damage limitation developed between opposing front-line battalions, to the chagrin of high commands' intent, through the

[1] Illustratively, a recent survey of IR practitioners in North American universities found only 15 percent of Canadian professors self-identified as working within the "realist" paradigm, as against 25 percent in the US. See Michael Lipson, Daniel Maliniak, Amy Oakes, Susan Peterson, and Michael J. Tierney, "Divided Discipline? Comparing Views of US and Canadian IR Scholars," *International Journal* 62 (Spring 2007): 327-43, cite at p. 332.

[2] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46 (Spring 1992): 391-425.

[3] See Roger E. Kanet and Edward A. Kolodziej, eds., *The Cold War as Cooperation: Superpower Cooperation in Regional Conflict Management* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); and Joseph L. Nogee and John Spanier, *Peace Impossible – War Unlikely: The Cold War Between the United States and the Soviet Union* (Glenview, ILL: Scott, Foresman, 1988).

[4] Raymond Aron, *Paix et guerre entre les nations* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1962), chap. 18 : "Les Frères ennemis."

implementation of tactics like trench raiding, to put an end to battalions' "exercising their own strategies of cooperation based on reciprocity."[5]

So for cooperation to be relevant to our story, it must be a particularly robust pattern of comportment, what for lack of a better word, I qualify as "healthy" cooperation. By this is implied something more than simply an agreement to disagree. Rather, our search for traces of good neighbourliness will require us to find evidence of this deeper variant of cooperation, in keeping with standard dictionary definitions of the word as entailing joint action on the part of entities *desirous* of working together out of mutual respect and in pursuit of mutual gain, rather than merely being forced to collaborate out of fear that events might otherwise slip beyond their ability to control them. Who knows, the two cooperating countries might even become "friends." But whether or not they like and respect each other, they each understand that good neighbourliness brings in its train a certain sense of mutual, and ineradicable, *obligation*.

Later in this paper I will offer my views as to the nature of that inexpungible obligation. For the moment, let us take a closer look at the concept of good neighbourliness. Although this has not been a widely studied rubric in IR, some scholars have ventured into these analytical thickets, and in so doing they have usually raised a second set of issues, associated with regional "identity." It is their belief that propinquity must become invested with sociological and not simply geographical meaning for good neighbourliness to take root. If they are correct, this provides us with another clue as we seek to unravel the elements of good neighbourliness.

With both these indicators in mind (obligation and regional identity), we set out on our journey into the meaning and content of good neighbourliness by revisiting two historical episodes associated with U.S. foreign policy in what has often been styled as America's "sphere of influence" – the Western hemisphere.

Good Neighbourliness in American Foreign Policy

Good neighbourliness assumed considerable policy content during the run-up to the Second World War, so much so that its pursuit gave rise to a diplomatic thrust *explicitly* bearing the name, the "Good Neighbor Policy." For sure, this policy, enunciated by the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt during the 1930s, was principally aimed *not* in a northerly direction, at Canada, but rather in a southerly one, at the Latin American republics. Moreover, it turned out to have a rather short shelf life; therefore, we might query just how helpful a template it can be, as means of taking the measure of Canada-U.S. good neighbourliness today.

I believe it can be very helpful. For two reasons, much heuristic value can be gleaned from examining that long-ago policy. First, the Good Neighbor Policy was accompanied by a very deliberate, at times highly creative, effort to endow geography with political and sociological significance; as we have already glimpsed, and shall see further on in this essay, arguments about good neighbourliness (or its absence) continue to be predicated upon assumptions about regional identity. In the 1930s, region really meant, for U.S. policymakers, the Western hemisphere, which was being imagined (or "constructed") as the principal pole of America's geopolitical identity. Secondly, the primary obligation to which the cooperating countries ostensively subscribed as a result of their desire to be good neighbours continues to represent the litmus test of good neighbourliness, the importance of which for contemporary Canada-U.S. relations cannot be overstated. To get slightly ahead of the story, it is my belief that what it meant to *behave* as a good neighbour then is really what it means to be a good neighbour today. We will shortly get to that irreducible behavioural

[5] See Robert M. Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), p. 86; and especially, Tony Ashworth, *Trench Warfare, 1914-1918: The Live and Let Live System* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1980).

dispensation, in the absence of which it becomes fatuous to speak of good neighbourliness; for the moment, let us examine the issue of regional identity.

During the 1930s, region was being endowed with geopolitical significance on the part of the Roosevelt administration in such a way as to turn on its head both a traditional American understanding of what geography must mean, as well as to confute a reigning Canadian perspective at the time and for some decades to follow. That latter perspective was captured in John Holmes' reminder that Canadians "have not taken very seriously the idea that they have special links with peoples of vastly different political traditions merely because they happen to be linked by an almost intraversable neck of land. History has bound Canada across traversable oceans to the northern hemisphere."[6] Insofar as concerned that traditional American understanding, it had been bluntly enunciated way back in 1820, when John Quincy Adams brusquely dismissed the idea that the U.S. and the nascent Latin American republics constituted a political community, or at least were evolving in such a direction: "As to an American System, we have it; we constitute the whole of it; there is no community of interests or principles between North and South America."[7] The secretary of state's viewpoint, if not his bluntness, dominated thinking in policy circles on regional identity (or lack thereof) until the interwar years. It would not be until their widespread disillusionment with Europe during those two decades that American policymakers would begin to talk as if they actually believed in the political solidarity and, indeed, superiority, of what was being touted as the "Pan American system." The "idea" of a politically superior Western hemisphere reached its apex in the first two administrations of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The demise of democracy nearly everywhere in Europe appeared to corroborate in a political sense what had long been perceived in a geographical sense – that the hemispheres truly were separate.[8]

It was during this period in world politics when the strategic importance of its Latin American neighbours had never seemed greater that the U.S. launched the Good Neighbor Policy.[9] In part, the effort to become a better neighbour to the Latin American republics stemmed from a problem that looks familiar enough today: Washington in the 1930s was worried about the global spread of anti-Americanism. Thus, even in the early years of the decade, before the existence of a perceived Axis (largely German) geopolitical threat to the Western hemisphere came to dominate American strategic thinking,[10] anxieties were being expressed regarding what in today's parlance would be considered a "legitimacy" deficit.[11] Unless this deficit was redressed, considerable damage could be inflicted upon American interests, and not just in the Western hemisphere. Then, as now, it was being argued that a solution to generic anti-Americanism might be found in the "laboratory" of Latin America.[12] Herbert Hoover's Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson, candidly told a nationwide radio audience in May 1931 that difficulties in the latter region had "damaged our good name, our credit, and

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[6] John W. Holmes, *The Better Part of Valour: Essays on Canadian Diplomacy* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1970), p. 11.

[7] Adams to President James Monroe, 19 September 1820, quoted in Cushing Strout, *The American Image of the Old World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 48.

[8] See on this topic the brilliant analysis in Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Western Hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954).

[9] See Bryce Wood, *The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961); and Edward O. Guerrant, *Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1950).

[10] On the perceived strategic importance of Latin America during the latter part of the 1930s, see my *Latin America and the Transformation of U.S. Strategic Thought, 1936-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984).

[11] See, for this "crisis in legitimacy," Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), pp. 105-58.

[12] For this imagery, see Julia E. Sweig, *Friendly Fire: Losing Friends and Making Enemies in the Anti-American Century* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006).

our trade far beyond the apprehension of our peoples."[13] Editorializing upon the state of U.S.-Latin American relations shortly after the Republicans were turned out of office in the November 1932 elections, the *Latin-American Digest* reflected sadly that inter-American relations had "come to such a pass that when the United States does not do a criminal act, it is pointed to with pride. It is as if I passed a neighbor in the street and expected him to give me praise because I did not stick a knife into him."[14]

The incoming Roosevelt administration did want to extirpate America's bad-neighbourly reputation, as had the Hoover administration before it. But what really would energize Washington was the subsequent emergence of dread that legitimacy problems could easily become security ones. Thus a bargain emerged, one that gave meaning and form to the Good Neighbor Policy: Washington would promise (after a fashion) never again to intervene militarily in the affairs of its Latin American neighbours,[15] and the latter would strive to perfect their "democratic" governance structures, in such a way as to render their respective states and societies immune from the contagion of totalitarianism that was sweeping through much of the European (and Asian) body politics during the second half of the 1930s. The U.S. would no longer threaten their security, and the neighbours would take measures to ensure that no security threat to the U.S. would spring from their soil. For good and what was thought to be *necessary* measure, the Western hemisphere south of Canada was being endowed with a common identity, known as "Pan Americanism."[16]

This regional identity never did take gain traction, nor could it, given the myriad political, economic, and cultural differences separating the U.S. from its Latin American "neighbours" – to say nothing of the intra-regional divisions frustrating, then as well as today, the development of even a Latin American identity.[17] The reciprocal pledges not to serve as security problems to each other failed to withstand the test of time, and in any case America's joining the war soon rendered the Latin American republics of secondary importance (if that) to its overall strategy. But while the Good Neighbor Policy, despite a few short-term benefits, turned into a long-term failure, it in no way follows that the debate over the core conditions of good neighbourliness of those years has become irrelevant to contemporary discussions. Quite to the contrary: what in those years constituted the "bottom line" of good neighbourly behavior in the Western hemisphere *south* of the U.S.-Mexico border would come equally to represent the very essence of good neighbourliness *north* of the Rio Grande. One particular norm of the Good Neighbor Policy continues to shape the debate about neighbourly behaviour as between Canada and the U.S. to this day.

Good Neighbours à la Molière? Canada, the U.S., and the "Special Relationship"

There are so many differences in the manner in which America has conducted foreign policy in its "near abroad" – north and south – that I hesitate even to hint at certain aspects of

[13] Quoted in Alexander De Conde, *Herbert Hoover's Latin-American Policy* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970; orig. pub. 1951), p. 65.

[14] Quoted in Carleton Beals, *The Coming Struggle for Latin America* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1938), p. 245.

[15] At two inter-American conferences (Montevideo in 1933, and Buenos Aires in 1936) Washington made a (qualified) commitment to refrain from intervening militarily in Latin American affairs. Though the Latin American states interpreted the commitment as a genuine revolution in US diplomatic practice, one scholar was closer to the reality in terming the nonintervention pledge the "legal equivalent of a moral imperative to walk through a wall." William Everett Kane, *Civil Strife in Latin America: A Legal History of U.S. Involvement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1972), pp. 4-5.

[16] On that regional identity, see Jesús M. Yepes, *Philosophie du Panaméricanisme et organisation de la paix* (Neuchâtel: Éd. de la Baconnière, 1945). For a less optimistic analysis, see Lawrence E. Harrison, *The Pan-American Dream: Do Latin America's Cultural Values Discourage True Partnership with the United States and Canada?* (Boulder: Westview, 1997).

[17] On those differences, see Mario Vargas Llosa, "The Paradoxes of Latin America," *American Interest* 3 (January/February 2008): 7-11.

commonality in U.S. regional diplomacy. That said, let me suggest three ways in which it could be argued U.S.-Latin American relations betray a similarity with U.S.-Canadian relations: 1) there is the obvious and never changing element of power asymmetry as between America and its regional partners, characterized by some as "hegemony;"[18] 2) there is the legacy of past military conflict between the U.S. and its regional neighbours, providing the reminder the New World has not always been (if indeed it is today) a "zone of peace"; and 3) there is the ubiquitous phenomenon of anti-Americanism, even if only of an "instrumentalist" kidney, such as was on public display during the last federal election campaign in this country, when Prime Minister Paul Martin for a time enjoyed lifting lines from Hugo Chávez's sulfurate pages, in seeking (albeit without success) to persuade Canadians that he was running not against Stephen Harper but against George W. Bush.[19]

This section's subheading makes allusion to Molière's famous character in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, M. Jourdain, who sought to advance his chances for social (and romantic) success by improving his elocution. To this end, he hired a language coach, from whom he learned the surprising fact that he had been speaking prose all his life! So when it comes to the practice of bilateral relations in North America (north of the Rio Grande, at least) we might say that even though the Good Neighbor Policy had yet to be invented, Canada and the U.S. had begun speaking this geopolitical prose in the early years of the 20th century, a time when many North Americans were regarding the bilateral relationship as representing something "special." Perhaps, then, we might find some evidence about what it means to be good neighbours by examining the qualities associated with "special relationships"?

The category of special relationships is, of course, the major reason why any attempt systematically to compare U.S. relations with Canada to U.S. relations with Latin America lends itself to such easy criticism, because while most sentient analysts would agree that Canada and the U.S. have developed a special relationship, few if any would choose this rubric as a means of capturing the essence of America's diplomacy toward Latin America in general, or toward any Latin country in particular. The criticism is more than sound; typically the comparison group for discussing special relationships is to be found not elsewhere in the Western hemisphere, but among America's *transoceanic* allies (the Europeans, but also the Australians and the Japanese).[20] Yet even among that more common set of comparators, a case can still be made that the Canada-U.S. relationship truly is more "special" than any other of America's bilateral relationships.

Empirically, the Canadian-American relationship possesses an unusual claim to noteworthiness and even, in a couple of respects, to uniqueness. There are three reasons for saying this. To begin with, the two countries were either the first, or among the first, Western neighbouring countries to forge between themselves what would come to called a "security community." Secondly, the alliance that followed upon, though was not necessarily prefigured by, their security community happens to be America's longest-running unbroken alliance. And thirdly, Canada has, by dint of geography, demography, and economic interdependence, a role in the U.S. homeland security agenda that no other Western ally of America's can claim.

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[18] See Andrew Hurrell, "Hegemony in a Region that Dares Not Speak Its Name," *International Journal* 61 (Summer 2006): 545-66.

[19] The American ambassador to Canada, David Wilkins, was not amused by the then-prime minister's rhetoric, and issued the minatory reminder that "[i]t may be smart election-year politics to thump your chest and constantly criticize your friend and your No. 1 trading partner. But it is a slippery slope, and all of us should hope that it doesn't have a long-term impact on the relationship." Quoted in Daniel LeBlanc and Gloria Galloway, "Washington Scolds Ottawa," *Globe and Mail*, 14 December 2005, pp. A1, A12.

[20] See John Dumbrell and Axel Schäfer, eds., *Allies and Clients: America's Special Relationships* (London: Routledge, forthcoming in 2008).

By security community is meant an order in which the use of force as a means of conflict resolution between members of the group has simply become inconceivable; i.e., they neither go to war against one another nor even consider doing so. Instead, whatever problems that arise between them, they undertake to resolve peacefully. With neither organized armed conflict nor the threat of such conflict playing a part in the resolution of intra-group problems, policymakers and other policy elites are able to entertain "dependable expectations" that peaceful change will be the only kind of change that occurs.[21] Now, the Canada-U.S. security community, though very stable, is not necessarily any more stable than some other security communities (for instance, the Western European members of the European Union). Instead, what sets the Canada-U.S. security community apart from others is not so much its robustness as its *longevity.* The Canada-U.S. security community is often held to be the first "pluralistic"[22] security community ever to have come into existence between neighbours – not only in the transatlantic world, but also in the entire world. There may be reason to doubt this assertion of pioneering status, for some will tell you that the original Western security community arose not in North America but in Scandinavia, pursuant to the peaceful (if not completely frictionless) separation of Norway from Sweden in 1905.[23] It is probably wisest to conclude that the two security communities arose more or less simultaneously, and did so independently of each other during the interwar period (by which time both sets would discontinue the non good-neighbourly practice of drafting war plans against the other member of the dyad).[24]

The second noteworthy feature of the Canada-U.S. relationship concerns their alliance; it may not be Canada's oldest continuous alliance, but it certainly is America's. Such a statement might seem bizarre, even insulting, to those who believe they already know the identity of America's "oldest" ally: France. But what those who accurately remember the 1778 alliance between America and France often forget is how short-lived this collective-defence arrangement turned out to be.[25] The reality is that Washington and Paris would only briefly be allied: the accord struck in 1778 quickly started to wilt with the peace of 1783, and it *officially* unravelled in 1800, with the treaty of Mortefontaine; it would not be until 1949 that

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[21] Emanuel Adler and Michael N. Barnett, "Governing Anarchy: A Research Agenda for the Study of Security Communities," *Ethics & International Affairs* 10 (1996): 63-98, quote at p. 73.

[22] The foundation for theorizing security communities was laid down in Karl W. Deutsch, et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957). To Deutsch and his associates, there can exist two kinds of security community: an "amalgamated" form that culminates in, and is defined by, the establishment of a central government (as in federations like the United States, or Canada); and a "pluralistic" form that takes shape *between* sovereign states (as in the Canada-US security community).

[23] On the events leading to the rupture of Norway's union with Sweden a century or so ago, see Michael Stolleis, "The Dissolution of the Union between Norway and Sweden in 1905: A Century Later," in *Rett, nasjon, union – Den svensk-norske unionens rettslige historie 1814-1905*, ed. Ola Mestad and Dag Michalsen (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2005), pp. 35-48.

[24] For the argument that the two security communities originated at more or less the same time in the early 20th century, and eventually merged into one transatlantic security community, see Richard Ned Lebow, "The Long Peace, the End of the Cold War, and the Failure of Realism," *International Organization* 48 (Spring 1994): 249-77, citation at pp. 271-72. On the abandonment of intra-group war plans, see Magnus Ericson, "A Realist Stable Peace: Power, Threat, and the Development of a Shared Norwegian-Swedish Democratic Security Identity 1905-1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, Lund University, Sweden, 2000); and Louis Morton, "Germany First: The Basic Concept of Allied Strategy in World War II," in *Command Decisions*, ed. Kent Roberts Greenfield (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1960), pp. 12-22.

[25] In fact, France has had far "older" allies than the US – Sweden for instance during the Thirty Years' War, to say nothing of Scotland – while for America France might have been its first ally, but it was an alliance that proved to be brief. See Pierre Goubert, *The Course of French History*, trans. Maarten Ultee (London: Routledge, 1991), p 116; and Marvin R. Zahniser, *Uncertain Friendship: American-French Diplomatic Relations Through the Cold War* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975), p. 70.

the two "oldest allies" would once more become linked in a collective-defence pact, with the Washington treaty and the formation of NATO. But because France is so often, if inaccurately, recalled as being America's oldest *continuous* ally, it is easy to lose sight of who actually has occupied that status: Canada.

The problem is compounded by the tendency of many to assume that alliances must always be summoned forth by treaties, and must above all be formalized arrangements with permanent institutional structures. But alliances, as Stephen Walt argues, can and do take shape independently of treaties, and they can even exist "informally," though assuredly in reality they can be, and often are, every bit as meaningful as more formal pacts: the operative notion is that these be effective instances of reciprocated defence collaboration.[26] In the case of the Canadian-American alliance, the starting point is generally considered to have been a formal accord, albeit not a treaty. This was the agreement struck by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Mackenzie King in the upstate New York town of Ogdensburg, in mid-August 1940.[27] This accord led directly to the creation of the first of what would be a long line of binational defence arrangements, the Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD), which set to work planning a series of measures to enhance continental security.[28]

In time, the PJBD would be supplemented with, and to an extent even eclipsed by, newer institutional means of strengthening North American defence cooperation, among the most important of these being the Military Cooperation Committee (MCC) of 1946, the North American Air (now Aerospace) Defence Command (NORAD) of 1958, and more recently the Binational Planning Group (BPG) of 2003.[29] To these must be added a thick network of other accords, committees, and arrangements pertaining to North American defence, whose numbers are no easy matter to keep count of, but which run into the several hundreds.[30] Thus, in a manner distinctly different from most of America's transatlantic relations, the United States and Canada were solidly allied (if not always in total agreement on perceiving and responding to threat) well before the formation of NATO, and would almost certainly still be allied had the latter organization never come into existence.

The third noteworthy aspect of the Canada-U.S. relationship is the most important of all, what I have elsewhere referred to as the "Kingston dispensation."[31] In so many ways it does make the relationship between the two North American countries empirically more "special" than any of the defence and security linkages either North American country might have with transoceanic allies. It does so because it establishes the boundary conditions for Canadian

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[26] Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 1: "I define *alliance* as a formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states. This definition assumes some level of commitment and an exchange of benefits for both parties…"

[27] Insight into the changing context of Canada-US security debates in the half-decade preceding the accord can be found in Frederick W. Gibson and Jonathan G. Rossie, eds., *The Road to Ogdensburg: The Queen's/St. Lawrence Conferences on Canadian-American Affairs, 1935-1941* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1993).

[28] See Christopher Conliffe, "The Permanent Joint Board on Defense, 1940-1988," in *The U.S.-Canada Security Relationship: The Politics, Strategy, and Technology of Defense*, ed. David G. Haglund and Joel J. Sokolsky (Boulder: Westview, 1989), pp. 146-65.

[29] See Dwight N. Mason, "The Canadian-American North American Defence Alliance in 2005," *International Journal* 60 (Spring 2005): 385-96.

[30] No one knows exactly how many such agreements have been reached. The most recent compilation, made by the BPG, lists at least 851 but mentions that some of these may no longer be operative. Bi-National Planning Group, *The Final Report on Canada and the United States (CANUS) Enhanced Military Cooperation*, Peterson AFB (CO), 13 March 2006, Appendix G.

[31] David G. Haglund, "North American Cooperation in an Era of Homeland Security," *Orbis* 47 (Autumn 2003): 675-91.

participation in American "homeland security." It is an arrangement that predates the founding of the U.S. alliance with Canada by two years, and resulted from a reciprocal desire to resolve a security conundrum inherent in the North American neighbours' radically different approaches to the deteriorating security environment in Europe. Should war come to that continent, Canada was almost certain to join in, because Britain would have; by contrast, America remained firmly set against participation, despite the appearance of occasional denunciations at home of an isolationist grand strategy that could look more cowardly than coherent.[32]

In August 1938, during the height of the Sudetenland crisis and at a moment when war in Europe seemed imminent, President Roosevelt told an audience at Queen's University that America would "not stand idly by" were the physical security of Canada threatened by a European adversary, as a consequence of the country's participation in a European war. Nor could the U.S. stand by in any such event, for Canada's participation would be bound to have an impact on American grand strategy, because if things were to go badly in Europe for the allies, who could say what consequences might unfold in the Western hemisphere, and what the implications would be for the Monroe Doctrine?

For his part, Prime Minister King, speaking a few days later (though not in Kingston), reciprocated: he pledged that Canada would ensure that nothing it did would jeopardize the physical security of the United States. Taken together, the two leaders' remarks reflected a new dispensation that would come to shape the unalterable normative core of North American security: henceforth, each country understood that it had a "neighbourly" obligation to the other to demonstrate nearly as much solicitude for the other's physical security needs as for its own.[33] Significantly, the Kingston dispensation implies a level of reciprocal obligation that exceeds those that define either a security community or an alliance; for in the case of the former, the obligation is that one does not make or threaten armed conflict against one's neighbour, while in the case of the latter (if NATO's article 5 is taken as a guide) the obligation extends to treating armed attack upon an ally as tantamount to an armed attack upon oneself (with the response to same, however, being left to the discretion of the allies).[34]

This examination of their special relationship allows us to draw an important inference: the indefeasible obligation that underlies good neighbourliness between Canada and the U.S. is that each looks out for the other's legitimate security interests in North America. Does it follow, however, that more than this condition needs to be fulfilled? In particular, does good neighbourliness also require the presence of a robust regional identity?

Regional Identity and Good Neighbourliness

The issue of regional identity brings with it a double set of challenges. First is the task of trying to figure out what this ambiguous word, "identity," actually means, and how it might be applied to the study of international relations and foreign policy. Not for nothing have some students of identity suggested that we look for a better concept if we seek to advance our understanding, as this one is simply too confusing and self-contradictory for anyone's

[32] For one early (and minoritarian) critique of the administration's policy, see Livingston Hartley, *Is America Afraid? A New Foreign Policy for the United States* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1937).

[33] One Canadian journalist based in the US provided a succinct statement of the problem from Washington's perspective – namely that Canadian belligerency potentially forced Washington to "choose between a war over Canada and abandonment of the Monroe Doctrine." John MacCormac, *Canada: America's Problem* (New York: Viking Press, 1940), p. 13.

[34] The wording of article 5 is instructive, for it obliges each ally to "assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary …" *The NATO Handbook: Fiftieth Anniversary Edition, 1949-1999* (Brussels: NATO Office of Information and Press, 1998), p. 396.

usage.[35] Still, we could well ask, what important concept in IR is any less ambiguous or contested? A certain amount of confusion is par for the course, but this does not resolve the second, more significant, set of problems with assuming that a shared regional identity must be a necessary condition of good neighbourliness.

Even if we knew what was supposed to be connoted by a regional identity, we would still need to figure out a) who was in the region, and b) how regional identity could be squared with the respective national identities of the states in the neighbourhood, particularly in light of the recent strength of the attitudinal disposition known as "anti-Americanism."[36] Take the issue of who is in the region: Robert Pastor has recently argued that the U.S. deserves to be faulted for not having doing more to foment a communitarian ethos that subsumes Canada, Mexico, and itself under a shared North American identity. Thus he urges whoever is elected in November to "replace a bad neighbor policy with a genuine dialogue with Canada and Mexico aimed at creating a sense of community and a common approach to continental problems," and he goes on to assert that "no set of foreign policies would contribute more to U.S. prosperity and security than those devoted to building a North American Community."[37] However, another well-placed American, former ambassador to Canada Gordon Giffin, warns against bringing Mexico into the North American community, saying that "we must remember that it takes two to tango, not three," and that any attempt to trilateralize North America is bound to fail, and therefore place into jeopardy any community-building project *à deux*.[38]

One of the apparent paradoxes of North America is that the undoubted widening and deepening of economic interdependence associated with NAFTA has produced "regionalization" but has stopped far short of the stimulation of a regional identity. As Ann Capling and Kim Richard Nossal observe, North America has puzzled students of regional integration, especially those of a neo-functionalist ilk who keep waiting for "spill-over" to engender a greater feeling of togetherness on the part of neighbours. "[D]espite elite-driven efforts to deepen NAFTA and to construct notions of a regional community, a North American 'imaginary' has not emerged. Rather, the opposite has occurred: we have seen the 're-borderization' of the U.S. …"[39]

But if it has been the U.S. that has been "bordering up" in the physical sense of girding its northern and southern frontiers, it should not be assumed that the neighbours have been "de-bordering" from the point of view of identity. Indeed, to take just the two northernmost states of the continent, it is obvious that there was much more enthusiasm about a North American regional identity a century ago than there is today. Starting in the decade preceding the First World War, there began to develop an "imaginary" explicitly bearing the name "North American Idea," and for a while it inspired the hope, among many policy elites,

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[35] See especially, for this stricture, Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'," *Theory and Society* 29 (February 2000): 1-47.

[36] On that disposition, see Andrew Kohut and Bruce Stokes, *America Against the World: How We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked* (New York: Times Books/Henry Holt, 2006); Tony Judt and Denis Lacorne, *With Us or Against Us: Studies in Global Anti-Americanism* (New York: Palgrave, 2005); and Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds. *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

[37] Robert A. Pastor, "The Future of North America: Replacing a Bad Neighbor Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 87 (July/August 2008): 84-98, quotes at pp. 85, 98.

[38] Gordon Giffin, "Thou Must Not Forsake a Beneficial Partnership," *Globe and Mail*, 20 June 2008, p. A21.

[39] Ann Capling and Kim Richard Nossal, "The Contradictions of Regionalism in North America," *Review of International Studies* 35 (forthcoming in 2009).

that the good-neighbourly virtues of Canada and the U.S. might find emulators elsewhere, including and especially in war-prone Europe.[40]

Today, one looks in vain for evidence that many Canadian elites regard North America in the same inspirational way; it may be a market, and it is a home, but it is hardly a vision in the manner of a century ago. If anything, many Canadians seem to want to find the roots of the so-called "national" identity outside the confines of North America, and for some, Europe has (re)emerged as a pole.[41] The Canadian national identity, notwithstanding the integration of the North American marketplace, continues to have, and apparently to require, the U.S. as its "significant Other." Thus while it may not be correct to describe Canada as the world's original "anti-American" polity, it is fair at least to give it pride of place among those locales that can be styled as "not-America."[42]

Nothing illustrates this better than Michael Adams's bestseller of a few years ago, *Fire and Ice*, with its insistence that stories about American and Canadian "values" coming more to resemble each other were simply tales. The reality, Adams sought to convince his readers, was rather that the two countries were diverging in important aspects of their national characters.[43] The Adams thesis has triggered a debate, as can be imagined. Against the argument of societal ("values") divergence, there is a counterargument that stresses either that the trend is toward convergence, or that there is simply no trend whatsoever worth observing in respect of the national characters of two peoples who resemble each other more than either resembles any other foreign nationality.[44] No one argues that Canada and the U.S. have identical national characters, so the debate swirls around the degree of difference, and it is obvious, as Adams himself concedes, that ideology enters into how one interprets the "data," for he tells us that "[a]rguing about Canada and the United States is like arguing about the Bible: anyone can find a chapter and verse (or in this case, a statistic or policy outcome) to suit their ideological fancy."[45]

As fascinating as the debate is, it may not much matter, for there is a body of research that indicates that differences between peoples do not really need to be very large in order to be significant, in what Sigmund Freud back in 1931 termed the "narcissism of minor differences." A social-psychological approach known as "social identity theory" (SIT) even posits that any difference, no matter how tiny, will suffice to instill in members of a group a sense of distinctive identity, almost always accompanied by a feeling of superiority, vis-à-vis members of the referent group (the Other), and this notwithstanding that the distinctions

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[40] In particular, see James A. Macdonald, *The North American Idea* (Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart, 1917); and Donald M. Page, "Canada as the Exponent of North American Idealism," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 3 (Autumn 1973): 30-46.

[41] Philip Resnick, *The European Roots of Canadian Identity* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2005). Also see Marie Bernard-Meunier, "The 'Inevitability' of North American Integration?" *International Journal* 60 (Summer 2005): 703-11; and Lawrence Martin, "North America's Era of Limitless Integration Draws to a Welcome Close," *Globe and Mail*, 3 June 2008, p. A19.

[42] For this usage, albeit in the European not North American context, see Timothy Garton Ash, *Free World: America, Europe, and the Surprising Future of the West* (New York: Random House, 2004), pp. 55-59.

[43] Michael Adams, *Fire and Ice: The United States, Canada and the Myth of Converging Values*, with Amy Langstaff and David Jamieson (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2003).

[44] For a rebuttal of the Adams thesis, see Reginald C. Stuart, *Dispersed Relations: Americans and Canadians in Upper North America* (Washington and Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

[45] See his letter to the editor, *Literary Review of Canada* 16 (June 2008): 30-31. Adams was writing in response to an article the *Review* published the previous month, praising the Stuart book and, therefore, dispraising his own. For that review, see Edward Grabb, "Not So Different After All," *Literary Review of Canada* 16 (May 2008): 11-12.

between the "in group" and the "out group" may be so miniscule as to be barely detectable to others. Competition among what social psychologists label "minimal groups" is triggered by a cognitive need of peoples for collective self-esteem, and that cognitive need, in turn, is reinforced, in the sphere of international relations, by the mere existence of international anarchy.[46]

CONCLUSIONS

If the test of good neighbourliness is the fostering of a strong regional identity, then it is obvious that Canada and the U.S. (and even more so either of those two and Mexico) do not make the grade. But North Americans who sometimes evince admiration for the Europeans' ability to have generated (somewhat) of a regional ("European") identity, should ponder the beneficial aspects of their own regional history. In particular, community-building enthusiasts who suffer from EU envy should reflect upon the reasons why some (not all) aspects of integration seem to be more fully developed in Western Europe than in North America.

Simply put, the Europeans understood only too well, after the second global conflagration of the twentieth century, that they had best develop means of dealing with one another different from the oft-tried, and painful, methods associated with the European balance-of-power. So they aspired to create, through the process of economic and political integration, a zone of peace among themselves. And by and large, aided by some considerable injection of offshore resources and attention, to say nothing of a looming Soviet threat, they succeeded in erecting a regional security community, one whose preservation must always remain the uppermost concern of sentient policymakers, for whom the risk entailed by a stalling or, worse, reversal, of integration continues to be that of intra-European war.[47]

By contrast, major war in North America has been a much more distant phenomenon, hence the felt need for community-building *à l'européenne* has not been as great. The Europeans, grown so familiar with the depressing geopolitical side of life on the twentieth century's "dark continent,"[48] are only too conscious of how immediate is the link between the fostering of community and the preservation of peace. For the North Americans, on the other hand, the same easy linkage cannot be drawn between community-building and the avoidance of regional interstate war. They have, in so many ways, had a much luckier recent past than the Europeans.

Nor should anyone lament that good fortune. Still, from time to time, it is well to reflect upon the possibility that there need be nothing inevitable about the continuation of the North American zone of peace. For what it "means" for Canada and the U.S. to be good neighbours, when all is said and done, is exactly what it has meant ever since the late 1930s: above all else, they must each show a healthy regard for the legitimate physical security interests of the other. Though it has been seven decades since Roosevelt and King enunciated it, the Kingston dispensation continues to govern, and indeed serve as the touchstone of, good-neighbourly behaviour between Canada and the U.S. Put differently,

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[46] Jonathan Mercer, "Identity and Anarchy," *International Organization* 49 (Spring 1995): 229-52. Also see Jennifer Crocker and Riia Luhtanen, "Collective Self-Esteem and Ingroup Bias," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58 (January 1990): 60-67; Noel Kaplowitz, "National Self-Images, Perception of Enemies, and Conflict Strategies: Psychological Dimensions of International Relations," *Political Psychology* 11, 1 (1990): 39-82; Iver B. Neumann, "Self and Other in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 2 (June 1996): 139-74; and Susan Oyama, "Innate Selfishness, Innate Sociality," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 12 (December 1989): 717-18.

[47] This is the thesis starkly presented in Philippe Delmas, *De la prochaine guerre avec l'Allemagne* (Paris: Éd. Odile Jacob, 1999), which despite its provocative title is an ardent plea for the continuation of European integration primarily via tight cooperation between France and Germany.

[48] See Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).

should the obligations assumed back in 1938 fall by the wayside, then there would be little left to the claim of the two states to be good neighbours.

It is important that we not lose sight of this necessary condition of good neighbourliness, for often policy advocacies get voiced that either put the cart before the horse, or proceed on the basis that the desirable can be a substitute for the essential, or do both. An instance of doing both came in the 2005 report of a high-level task force that was commissioned to study the "community-building" prospects of Canada, the United States, and Mexico: among the series of recommendations, the report contained one major proposal, namely that the three countries establish, by 2010, a "North American economic and security community."[49] The chairs of this thirty-one member task force were John Manley, William Weld, and Pedro Aspe, respectively from Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. The New York-based Council on Foreign Relations sponsored their work, in conjunction with the Canadian Council of Chief Executives and the Consejo Mexicano de Asuntos Internacionales. Not surprisingly, given the ambitious (not to say grandiose) nature of many of the report's recommendations, some of the task force's members were moved to append a dissenting, or otherwise modifying, view to the set of proposals.[50] What is surprising, however, is that none challenged the contention that the three countries should be working toward the construction of a *security* community.

Why this is surprising is that it really does misstate the problem, at least in the realm of security: it is generally conceded (though there are some skeptics) that for nearly three-quarters of a century, Canada, the U.S., and Mexico *have* constituted a security community. The real challenge is whether, given the variety of threats they face in this new century, they can preserve what is already built.

Policy Recommendation

"Big ideas" of the sort invoked in that community-building report can be inspirational, but they are unlikely to generate any noticeable regional identity in North America. What is needed in the realm of policy advocacy is rather a focus on what has to be done, and in our case, what it means to *preserve* good-neighbourliness between Canada and the United States in light of the manifold challenges of the early 21st century. Some of those challenges, as ongoing legal proceedings both in Canada and at Guantánamo Bay indicate, involve Canadian citizens who have given every sign of wishing to practice very bad-neighbourly behaviour – of the kind, for instance, that Irish-Americans associated with the Fenian movement in the 19th century used to promote when they targeted Canadians and Canada as part of their own jihad against Britain.[51] But it is not only problems associated with what Frank Harvey suggestively terms the "homeland security dilemma"[52] that crop up on the list of potential challenges to the North American zone of peace, for some will tell you that disputes over water and other resources, as well as tangles over boundaries and jurisdictional matters in the far North, might yet imperil good-neighbourliness.

Early in the last century, an otherwise forgettable president of Chile uttered a memorable response when asked whether he found it difficult to preside over his country's fortunes. Not

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[49] *Building a North American Community*, Independent Task Force Report no. 53 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2005), quote at p. xvii, from Foreword by Richard N. Haass.

[50] These were gathered in a special section of the report, and published under the heading, "Additional and Dissenting Views," pp. 33-39.

[51] For a discussion of what we might call the "new Fenianism" in North American security, see my "The Parizeau-Chrétien Version: Ethnicity and Canadian Grand Strategy," in *The World in Canada: Diaspora, Demography, and Domestic Politics*, ed. David Carment and David Bercuson (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), pp. 92-108.

[52] Frank P. Harvey, "The Homeland Security Dilemma: Imagination, Failure and the Escalating Costs of Perfecting Security," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 40 (June 2007): 283-316.

at all, said Ramón Barros Luco, because there really are only two kinds of problems in politics: those that solve themselves, and those that have no solution.[53] It would be tempting to end this analysis of what it means for Canada and the United States to be good neighbours on this note, and simply echo what Harvey has to tell us about the dilemma of homeland security: "The most important policy implication flowing from the preceding analysis is that there are no straightforward policy recommendations to offer…. If solutions were obvious, there would be no dilemma."[54]

Let me resist temptation, and offer one policy recommendation: that a major scholarly and policy-focused inquiry be mounted into the current state and future prospects of the Canada-U.S. security community. It might even be named, with a nod to the famous (if not necessarily successful) investigation into the prospects of postwar security commissioned by Woodrow Wilson in September 1917, the Inquiry.[55] Its mandate would be to investigate and report upon the challenges and dilemmas associated with *all*, and not just the homeland security, items of contemporary contention that might degrade the quality of the security community.

Those issues would include, but not be restricted to, some or all of the following issues of contemporary contention. From the Canadian perspective, matters relating to Arctic sovereignty, especially the status of the Northwest Passage (internal waterway, or international strait?) would figure high on list of topics susceptible of spoiling good neighbourly relations unless some resolution were obtained. As well, and from the perspective of both countries, resource issues (oil and other strategic minerals, but also water) remain sensitive matters of debate. Then, there are those questions associated with homeland security and shifting demographic balances that will continue to draw attention in both countries to the future of the border, raising questions as to the compatibility between economic regionalization and physical security. Finally, and also intimately associated with the homeland security agenda, are the important controversies affecting the juridical and civil-libertarian underpinnings of the regional security community.

If nothing else, the timing for such a binational, multiyear, and interdisciplinary endeavour could not be better, for between 2009 and 2014, i.e., a five-year span in which the Inquiry would be conducted, the North American neighbours will be celebrating two historic developments in the evolution of their regional zone of peace: 2009 marks the centenary of the signing of the Boundary Waters Treaty and the establishment of the International Joint Commission; and 2014 is the bicentennial of the last year when Canada and the United States squared off against each other militarily. With a new administration in Washington, and either a renewed government or a new one in Ottawa, it should be possible to stimulate official interest in such a project.

[53] The exact quote reads: "No hay sino dos clases de problemas en política: los que se resuelven solos y los que no tienen solución."
[54] Harvey, "Homeland Security Dilemma," p. 305.
[55] See Lawrence E. Gelfand, *The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace, 1917-1919* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

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